

Lamorbey and Sidcup Local History Society



Newsletter
Autumn 1993

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1992/93 was yet another busy Society year commencing as it did with the Dinner in October, which was the last event celebrating our fortieth anniversary. It proved such a convivial evening for us all that it provoked many members into requesting one the following year - or indeed as an annual event! Gill Brown has written an article on the Dinner from the stance of an ordinary participating member. From my angle as organiser (together with Norma Huntley) I was so pleased that everything was "All right on the night" as there had been one or two hiccups - for instance, the seating plan being revised forty eight hours prior to the event. We do not wish to detract from this special 1992 occasion, so perhaps a Dinner on our forty-fifth anniversary, but definitely in 2002 on our fiftieth!

There are some varied articles in this year's Newsletter, but I would draw your attention to that of Kitty Roome and her research of the place name of Lamorbey. I feel it is a lesson for us local historians on the knowledge of source material, how to use it, and the patience and determination necessary on such research. The Society will once again visit the Local Studies Centre at Hall Place in October when our host, Mr. Malcolm Barr-Hamilton will exhibit various documents and other material on our area. Perhaps the visit will provoke some of you into some sort of personal research of our locality, or even join other members in family history research.

During the early Autumn our book of Sidcup reminiscences should be on sale. Our thanks for the project must go to Dr. John Mercer for editing these memories. John's name is becoming well known in the local history world. His "Sidcup Story" is an established reference (as well as enjoyable) booklet, and he has written a description of Lamorbey & Sidcup for a map of 1895 published by Alan Godfrey Maps. Yet again he was invited to head the Borough studies walk around Lamorbey & Halfway Street in July. Our weekend in Norfolk (reported elsewhere) was organised by John, and as many of you know he is a tower of strength within many other aspects of our community. He celebrated his 70th birthday on 1st July 1993, so belated birthday wishes from us all.

Ann & Keith Brunton have received information from a previous occupant (now living in Norway) on the large house named "Savernake" in Carlton Road. They have been busy writing up notes and sketching the house. It is a project in itself and although I had intended it for this Newsletter, we will publish it later as a small booklet. Yet another L.S.L.H.S. publication!

On proof reading the "Sidcup Memories" I was amazed how many of those interviewed remembered the "Popplewell shop" in the High Street. The general ambience of this haberdashery shop has obviously left its imprint, leading me to feel that one or two of our members could write an article for our Archives.

Thank you for your reception of my talk on Heraldry. It really does help when you know you are among friends. Other budding speakers please note!

We thank Margaret Sharp for the donation of £10 for the sale of her Christmas Card boxes. This was done on her own initiative and represented many hours of hard work on her part and also on the part of Derek. Any other ideas for fund raising would be appreciated.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of Leonard Pile in December whilst abroad visiting family. Several of us attended a Memorial Gathering on 25th January at Eltham Crematorium, in which friends came forward and spoke of his life. Our hearts went out to his widow Irene at that special time and now we have come to admire her indomitable, courageous spirit.

Several of our members have been ill during the year, in particular Irene Pope during the winter period and Doris Bland missed several lectures due to very painful arthritis. Jean Brient, although attending meetings, has been unwell as has Ann Rogers. We wish them well in the future.

On a happier note - some members have reached the age of 80 and I would remind them that we decided in Committee some years back that at that age we would no longer require a Society subscription and the twice-yearly Kent History Federation Journal would be free. Please advise Jack Saunders, our Treasurer, if this information is relevant to you.

I do hope all members will enjoy the forthcoming Society year.

With best wishes,

Frances Oxley
Hon. Sec. and Editor

ANNIVERSARIES OF THE YEARS 1693, 1793 and 1893
by Dr. John Mercer

1693: This year saw the beginning of the National Debt. What a topical anniversary! It came about this wise. A new dynasty, William of Orange and Mary Stewart, had been engineered by the dominant power holders in the Kingdom. Money was needed for the French Wars (it was only because William wanted English support to curb the power of Louis XIV that he had accepted the English throne). Money was also wanted to run the increasing bureaucracy of the State. So money was privately loaned to the State and this formed the National Debt. In the following year, the Bank of England was formed to hold and to regulate the Debt. Loans were forthcoming from wealthy land owners and members of the Livery Companies and the East India Company. Locally Sir John Boyd, who had Danson Mansion built, was a Governor of the Bank of England.

1793: The French Revolution was in the 'Days of Terror' under Robespierre and Louis XIV was guillotined with Marie Antoinette, his Austrian Queen. Locally Shooters Hill was the site of the opening chapter of Charles Dickens "A Tale of Two Cities". Much opinion has been on the side of the Revolution in its early days, but a revulsion set in with the 'Terror' to be consolidated with the rise of Napoleon. Many a mother threatened a naughty child with the words, "If you aren't good, old boney will come and get you!" By 1793 Danson, Foots Cray Place, Frognal, The Hollies and Lamorbey Park were the residences of the good and the great. Foots Cray and Halfway Street were the local villages. Sidcup, like Brigden, was a hamlet.

1893: In this year the Home Rule Bill for Ireland passed its Third Reading in the House of Commons. Again, how topical a subject! This had been through a Liberal Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone (the Grand Old Man) and Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish leader of the Land League. Although it went through the Commons it was rejected by the House of Lords, who in those days had the authority to refuse a Bill passed in the Lower House (since the reforms of Lloyd George in the 1910s the Lords can only delay and never refuse a Bill from the Commons). In addition Parnell's career was ruined by being cited for divorce on account of his adultery with Kitty McShane. She is buried in the churchyard of the Roman Catholic Church in Chislehurst. Had the backwoodsmen of the Lords not turned out to defeat the Bill, the problems of Ireland might have been over three generations ago. Who knows? History is what happened. It is also what might have happened.

40TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER by Gill Brown

1992 was, as you all know, the 40th Anniversary of the Lamorbey & Sidcup Local History Society. We had, unlike our poor Queen, an "annus mirabilis" (a delightful year) with lots of interesting talks and outings. The year culminated in a Ruby Anniversary Dinner. The Dinner was held in St. John's Church Hall on Saturday, 3rd October 1992.

We arrived at the hall to be greeted with trays of sherry and orange juice. While sipping our drinks we talked and studied the seating plan. Dinner was delicious - beautifully cooked and served by our caterers, Mary & David Winter of Southfleet. Each part of the meal was named after an area of Sidcup or a special member of our Society. For example, Oxley Duchesse Potatoes served with Braised Beef a la Crays. I won't mention the sweet trolley - those who were there won't need reminding and those who weren't would turn green with envy.

After this delicious assortment with cheese and biscuits, plus coffee and mints, Jack Saunders introduced our Secretary, Frances Oxley. Frances made an excellent speech - short and sweet! A presentation was made to Norma Huntley, who was leaving us to live in Winchelsea. The gift was two books about that area.

Among the special guests were Mr. H. Ingram, the Society's President; Mr. George Kent, who must be one of our favourite speakers; and Mr. Malcolm Barr-Hamilton of the Local Studies Centre. Unavoidably absent and greatly missed was our Chairman, Iris Morris.

We played 'bingo' for the flower arrangements which were in ruby colours, as were the napkins and other decorations. An anniversary cake had been made by Jill of the catering company. It was beautifully decorated - almost too nice to cut. But we ate it anyway, and it was delicious. Mr. Philip Nash thanked Frances on our behalf for all her hard work in making the evening such a resounding success.

The weather outside was dull, wet and cool. Inside St. John's Hall was warmth, friendship and happiness. We now look forward to our 50th Anniversary and all the meetings, talks and outings in between.

The only thing missing was the Attendance Book being passed round!

Note from F.I.O. No need for the Attendance Book - we have our seating plan!

**QUEEN MARY'S DOLLS HOUSE - PREPARED FOR A VISIT TO WINDSOR,
24TH OCTOBER 1992**
by Joan Seymour

After a splendid lecture from Joan Seymour on "Life in Miniature", we later visited the Bethnal Green Museum, where she guided us round the cases containing the various Dolls Houses or Baby Houses. Joan was not able to do this at Windsor Castle in October, so produced this article for us to read at our leisure. By reproducing it in our Newsletter, it will remind us that our visit to Windsor was made just before the horrific fire that swept the castle. Many Society members echoed the phrase "Weren't we lucky to have visited when we did?", and we were distressed on seeing the press photographs identifying the rooms we had passed through. The fire did not reach the Dolls House, which was opened to the public immediately after the event. Over to Joan Seymour.....(F.I.O.)

The idea of a splendid Dolls House being made to present to the Queen came to Princess Marie Louise in 1921 after helping her mother, Princess Helena (daughter of Queen Victoria) to arrange a collection of miniature furniture for her cousin, Queen Mary, who was an avid collector of such things.

The Princess was a great friend of Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect, and asked him if he would design a dolls house fit for a Queen. After his initial surprise he accepted the challenge with great enthusiasm and discussed the idea with his friend, Sir Herbert Morgan, President of the Society of Industrial Design. At this time in the aftermath of the Great War many skilled British craftsmen were out of work, and it had been suggested to hold the British Empire Exhibition in 1924 to boost morale and economic recovery. It was decided that Queen Mary's Dolls House would be a major exhibit in its own gallery.

Queen Mary was happy to agree to these ideas and accept the Dolls House as a gift from the nation, as the money paid to view it would go to her favourite charities. A large group of craftsmen, artists and authors was formed to contribute to the project, the scale of 1" to the ft. decided upon, and it was also decided that as a modern-built house it would have all comforts such as plumbing, lighting and heating. The Queen often visited the house while it was being made to meet the artists and craftsmen.

The initial shell of the house, of carved wood, was erected in Lutyen's Delhi office in Appletree Yard in London (he was working on the plans for the great public buildings in Delhi at this time), and Lutyen's word was law on all aspects of the design of the house. Later, after a door and part of the wall of his office had been demolished to allow its removal, the Dolls House was taken to the drawing room of his own house in Mansfield Street, and it deprived his family of the use of the room for two years! Here the tiny furniture and articles for the house were delivered and a favourite rainy-day pastime for the Queen was a visit to see how things were progressing. Once she brought the King and they stayed for over four hours, arranging and playing with everything - but the Lady-in-Waiting was firmly kept outside the drawing-room, much to her chagrin! On one visit there was a most embarrassing occurrence, for the Queen's earring became caught up in the beard of an engineer who was showing Her Majesty the workings of the miniature lift. Lutyens was also bidden to Balmoral, where he walked five miles with the Queen, talking Dolls House all the time.

Eleven weeks before the opening of the Exhibition the Dolls House, with every small item in place, was ready to be presented to both Queen and the public. Still in the drawing room at Mansfield Street it was unveiled to the press and appeared in the newspapers on 8th February 1924. Early in March it was taken to Wembley and placed in its own pavilion in the Palace of the Arts of the British Empire Exhibition and it was visited by 1,617,556 people between April and November. It was then sent to Windsor Castle, where Lutyens had adapted a disused china room especially for the showing of the Dolls House. There it was placed in 1925 - as we see it today.

NOTES ON THE EARLY DAYS OF THE VALLIERS WOOD ROAD ESTATE.

Written and researched by Gill Brown, Ann Capelin
and Eric Percival

The Valliers Wood Road estate was constructed on part of the much larger area known as Valliers Wood. The original boundaries of this wood were Halfway Street (earlier Halfway Street Road), the county boundary with London (in the direction of Eltham) and the footpath which today runs to the rear of the houses in Longmeadow Road and which then continued on the route of the present Old Farm Avenue to join Pope Street (Avery Hill Road). Forest Lodge was the largest house to be built in the wood. Its site is now occupied by the town houses in Forest Way. The area around Valliers Wood was horticultural with many nurseries and greenhouses, some older houses could be found in Corbylands Road and Days Lane.

Valliers Wood Road, together with part of Ellison Road, was developed in 1928/29 by Frank Harvey Ayling, who sold his "Ayling Bungalows" for £550 or £55 cash and 17s. per week: these terms were negotiable and the properties could be bought with a deposit as low as £25. His advertisements invited you to "live in Ayling's new garden suburb". The development of the two roads was considered by the builders to be one estate, the houses being numbered 1-125 covering both roads. This, however, was soon altered. In 1930 all the numbers were changed and the two roads were separated. The next big change was in 1979 when a Housing Association purchased 63/65, which had large gardens to the rear, built a spur road and erected two small terraces calling this mini-estate Vincent Close. At first there was no vehicular access to Ellison Road, although pedestrians could walk through a gap in the hedge.

All the houses were lit by gas, electricity not being made available until about five years after the completion of building. All around the estate were the remains of the wood as the estate was the first development in this area towards what is now Longmeadow Road. The woods were full of bluebells in the spring.

Shopping was limited in choice. There were three shops in Halfway Street Road: Corbylands Stores and United Dairies on one side of Corbylands Road with Robins Stores on the other side. Fruit and vegetables could be bought from a shop on the site of the present Cambria Close. This was presumably an outlet for Cambria Nurseries. Robins Stores were said to sell everything including coal and paraffin. By the following year the newsagents, A. V. Shiers, had opened.

Here are some of the comments made by former residents:

"We moved here on our marriage, we called the house Betws y Coed because we planned our honeymoon there but my husband's motorcycle broke down and we never got there".

"Sidcup was lovely. All trees and strawberry fields, I could see cows over towards Longmeadow and when my nieces came we took our dog and he used to jump into the stream."

"My daughter was born at home. You had to pay then. It cost me £5 for the doctor, but she was worth it."

"Three bombs fell in the road, including a flying bomb".*

"Mr. Willimott had a little hut in Halfway Street Road where he did shoe repairs. He lived in Valliers Wood Road and later had a shop in the High Street."

"My mother put up a brass plate when we moved here 'Miss Game ALMC, Pianoforte Theory and Violin Taught'. The neighbours wondered who my father was. Was she his housekeeper and who did the baby belong to? Later they realised we were a proper family."

"There was a shop called Bobbies. This had a penny library run by the wife of Robinson Cleaver the Organist. They lived opposite Crombie Road."

* Note: the houses with only two chimney pots per stack were demolished at that time and rebuilt after the war.

THE "FLYING FLEA" OF SIDCUP

by John King

John King, Chairman of Lewisham Local History Society, was due to lecture to us last year on Croydon Airport. Unfortunately he was in hospital on the appointed date. I am happy to report that he has fully recovered and will lecture to us during 1994. This is the text of a letter John sent to myself

Dear Frances,

Grove Park, May 1993

I promised to let you have a note about the Flying Flea aeroplanes which were made in Sidcup in the mid-1930s. Basically the Flying Flea was a home-build aircraft, although some were made at manufacturers such as Aircraft Constructions Ltd at Sidcup. The name is a sort of translation from the French Pou de Ciel - the aircraft originated there from the designs of Henri Mignet, who coincidentally was born a hundred years ago.

Over 100 were built in England between 1935 and 1939 but I can only trace one which was made at Sidcup. This (G-AEEW) was built for Ron G Doig*, seemingly of Sidcup but no details. That was at the beginning of 1936. I believe it was sold that year. Certainly it was not Doig who was killed when it flew into the ground at a flying display at Penshurst on 4th May that year. However Doig's name appeared earlier in the ownership of a Flea G-ADPW from October 1935. The builder was probably E G Perman Ltd of Grays Inn Road, but I am not sure if he had a Sidcup connection. Doig's name also appeared as the person displaying another Flea G-ADWS at Eltham in March 1936 but he did not appear to be the owner and moreover the aircraft does not appear to have flown.

Sadly there were some fatal accidents to Fleas in the mid-1930s. Subsequent investigation by the authorities revealed a design problem. The Flea was not banned but Certificates of Airworthiness were not renewed unless a modification was carried out.

Another Flea with a S E London connection was G-ADVW which was built at Forest Hill in 1935 and test flown in 1936 at Westerham. G-AEFV was built at Lewisham for E. Mercer in 1936. G-AEOF was built at Horton Kirby for W Millon and is today on display in the aviation museum in Amsterdam.

I know very little about the company, although I have not made a serious attempt to get information and I ought to contact Bexley. But from the aviation directories I have, I see that Aircraft Construction Ltd was a private company formed in December 1935 with a nominal/authorised capital of £2,000 to manufacture the Flying Flea. Its works and office were at 61 Sidcup Hill and appeared to be still there in 1938; the telephone number was 396. But I know nothing of directors or managers.

I have seen the Flea in Amsterdam. Last Saturday I saw G-AFFI at the Yorkshire Air Museum.

Yours sincerely, (sgd) John King

PS I have one slide of a Flea, but not one of the above.

* In a further letter John King says that Ron Doig was of Canadian extraction and that 61 Sidcup Hill was both his home and the company base of "Aircraft Constructions Ltd".

MEMBERS' EVENING - 27TH JANUARY 1993

Described by Janet Woods

In a very full programme of activities there is always space for Members' Evening. It is a time when we get to know each other. Individual members stand up and tell the rest of us of some possession, activity or memory that is important to them. It is often an occasion that generates laughter, but I think the Members' Evening held on 27th January 1993 must hold the record in decibels registered from members roaring with laughter.

Valerie Allen is a closet proof reader. When she reads a book she notices that a brother two years older than a sister on page 5 has become four years older than his sister by page 55. She notices that a character whose maiden name was Smith at the beginning of the book seems to have a maiden name of Brown by the end. Val not only notices these things, she takes the trouble to point them out, writing to authors listing errors, but at the

same time congratulating them and saying how much she has enjoyed a good novel. It was these letters and the authors' responses that caused such laughter. Many authors reply, pleased and flattered by Val's attentions (particularly one who was asked for a photograph), and one author replied that her publisher provides a very superior young lady editor who is supposed to notice these errors in continuity and the author would take great pleasure in showing the young lady Valerie's list of errors.

However it was not an evening full of laughter. Norman Storer had brought along an album of cigarette cards illustrating Hitler's post-war rise to power. It is chilling to see something as mundane as cigarette cards illustrating the growing grip of the Nazis in Germany.

But we were soon back to the local scene. John Mercer had brought along a medal given whilst he was at school to commemorate an anniversary concerning one of the mid-1930s Kings. I don't need to accurately record what the medal commemorated or the name of the King, for the important thing was the memory of times past that this medal evoked for John. He gave a vivid description of his grandparents' house in Bexleyheath where John lived with his parents before the war. I was struck by the lady who came to collect the washing. She wore a flat cap. So many of the photographs of working women of that period show them in men's flat caps.

During the course of the evening Frances counted her spoons (aide-memoires of very happy holidays she and Pam had spent in the UK and abroad); Betty Mcleod brought along a baby's shoe to introduce the work of her very talented father; Margaret White showed us a scrap book she had purchased dating from the late Victorian period with the pressed seaweed and flowers so beautifully preserved in the scrapbook inspiring Margaret to follow the hobby herself; Angela Everett had her butter pats and mimed the making of butter - a process she had seen on holiday in Shropshire. It was really quite mouthwatering. Irene Pile brought a tram ticket and shared her happy memory of standing with her then young son and watching the last tram pass through Abbey Wood, and Joyce Illett brought a photograph showing her relative who had been a teacher at a school in Dulwich in the 1870s.

We finished with "stinks" and more laughter. Eric Percival had brought along a carbide bicycle lamp. It ran on acetylene gas. Apparently when you drop water on calcium carbide it produces acetylene - and a smell. Eric gave a practical demonstration. It was quite a performance lighting this thing and the thought of cycling up Sidcup Hill in the pouring rain and stopping to light your carbide lamp caused some amusement.

Apologies to anyone not mentioned. It was a good evening and everyone played their part - including those of us who just sat and laughed.

A VISIT TO DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY - 24TH APRIL 1993

by Valerie Allen

It was rather a damp morning when about 33 members of the Society set out by cars for the short journey to Dulwich via the South Circular. On arrival we all assembled in the main gallery where we were regaled by a concert given by a brass ensemble, mainly consisting of students, who gave an excellent performance of "Pictures from an Exhibition" by

Mussorgsky. The Gallery was full to capacity and we enjoyed the music and its presentation.

The concert finished at noon and we went our various ways during the free time before meeting again at the Picture Gallery at 2 o'clock. Most of us walked down to the nearby Greyhound Public House where we had good food, plentiful and well presented. By this time the weather had brightened up and we were able to wander round the delightful village or take a walk in the park. There was a slight difficulty when we reassembled for our tours as only one official guide was on duty, but Frances in her usual indomitable way sorted things out and a second guide was soon on the scene.

The Gallery is built on Dulwich College Estate and in fact the original College founded by Edward Alleyn in 1619 still stands adjacent to the Gallery. The main brains behind the idea of an Art Gallery for the masses were three friends of Sir John Soane, namely Noel and Madame Desenfans and Sir Francis Bourgeois who had a 'menage a trois'. The building was commenced in 1811 and first opened its doors to the public in 1817, preceding the National Gallery by some ten years. It is an unusual building in its design and in fact the central part of the roof is said to have lent itself to the later design of the much loved and sorely missed red telephone box. The Gallery is very compact consisting of several rooms and one can easily see all the paintings on exhibition during one afternoon.

The main attraction on the occasion of our visit was Rembrandt's "Girl at a Window" - a study of innocent charm which has inspired many other works over the centuries. It was interesting to see the various ways this picture had been interpreted by different artists and it must be one of the most copied paintings in existence. I found it interesting to see so many variations on a theme.

Each room in the Gallery depicts a particular type of painting, i.e. religious, domestic scenes, etc. My particular favourite was Murillo's painting of "Two Peasant Boys" dating from the seventeenth century. Another unusual aspect is that the three people originally involved in the Gallery had their coffins placed in the Gallery. Apparently none of them had a religious belief and this is the way they wished to be remembered.

The guides gave a very interesting tour lasting just over an hour and I am sure many of us will wish to return to the Gallery to study the paintings in greater detail. The Gallery itself is a fascinating building.

On the way home Frances suggested we call in to see Kingswood House, originally built in 1892 by H. V. Lanchester for Mr. Johnstone, the founder of the Bovril empire. It cost £20,000 to build in the form of a rambling stone-faced baronial castle. This beautiful house is now in the midst of a large council estate and is used to house the public library and community centre. We were able to see the ground floor and entrance hall and it is certainly impressive. The librarian told us that due to government cuts in budgets the building is shortly to be closed up and nobody at this point in time knows what its fate is to be.

We arrived back in Sidcup about 6 o'clock.

AN EAST ANGLIAN JOURNEY - 22ND MAY 1993

by Liz Fleet

A happy band of travellers met at Sidcup Railway Station to board the coach that was going to transport them to rural England. Our destination was Hadleigh in Suffolk - a town of medieval buildings. After being welcomed by one of the local publicans with a cup of coffee and biscuits we were split into two groups and given a tour of the Parish Church of St. Mary's. The church contained the town's weights and measures along with a "Gotch" - a large leather flagon from which the bellringers could drink when hot and thirsty. The wall to the side of the altar had squints for those outside to see the host being blessed. People would try to visit several different churches to see this happen.

Hadleigh in medieval times was a great wool town and wool was sold as far away as Russia. The curator of the Guildhall provided local colour with snippets of information on how the townsfolk would travel to the coastal towns of Felixstowe and Harwich and would give the coal steamer captains corn in exchange for coal.

After visiting Hadleigh the coach meandered its way through the sleepy village of Kersey with its pretty gardens and thatched roofs on to Gainsborough's town of Sudbury. After lunch we departed for Hedingham Castle, which has the best preserved Keep in Britain, built on a hilltop overlooking the village. It is surrounded by a high moat and has a dungeon. The inhabitants of the Keep were not afraid of their enemy and would drop fish out of the windows to show they had enough to eat. The houses of Hedingham village had some superb pargetting on their walls. The atmosphere was of a sleepy village with not an ice-cream shop to be seen.* Not that we needed any because to round off the trip we travelled a further mile or so to be whisked to the days of steam with a visit to the Colne Valley Railway. Smiling waitresses served us with tempting sandwiches, cake, coffee or tea, in preserved railway carriages. Thanks to Frances and Gill for a well-planned trip giving everyone memories of rural England.

* This isn't quite so as I have a photograph of Beryl Williams, Gwen Dudney and friend thoroughly enjoying their ice-cream cornets. F.I.O.

WEEKEND AT BARTON TURF, NORFOLK - 4/6 JUNE 1993

by Norma Huntley, Winchelsea, E. Sussex.

When this weekend was first mentioned I had expressed an interest in going, but then when I moved I put it out of my mind, so I was delighted to get a phone call from Frances asking me if I would like to make up one of the party who were going. So on Friday, 4th June, Eric Percival met me from work and we left Rye at 1.30 p.m. in glorious sunshine - weather that was to remain with us all the time.

We had a good journey, spending the time catching up with all the news and arriving at Barton Turf after a short break to revive ourselves at 6 p.m., where John Mercer, Frances Oxley, Pam Oxley and Gill Brown were waiting to greet us. After a refreshing cup of tea and being taken on a tour of the field centre, John suggested a short walk around Barton Turf Broad, where we met a family of geese, before our evening meal which had been booked at a local inn and which we all enjoyed.

The following morning came the luxury of a cup of tea in bed and breakfast cooked by John, ably assisted by Eric. We were going to a nature reserve at Hickling and one of the things we hoped to see was the swallowtail butterfly, which was rare and only found in that part of the country. Gill, Pam and I went to the local store before setting off and were privileged to see one of these rare butterflies on leaving the centre.

Hickling Nature Reserve was fascinating and we were able to see a great number of wildlife, including a Kingfisher having his breakfast, dragonflies, a Heron, a Redshank paddling on the water's edge, a Shoveller and two more Swallowtails - a great morning indeed.

The afternoon saw us taking a guided tour of Norwich. Our guide was a charming young lady who hailed from the Netherlands, but she knew her history and obviously loves Norwich and I personally felt at the end of the tour that I had learnt a great deal.

Back at the centre and after another, but more extensive walk around Barton Turf, we ladies were settled in comfortable chairs in the garden and kept supplied with wine while John and Eric prepared a delicious evening meal (you can see we were treated like royalty on this weekend and enjoyed every minute of it). We then offered to do the washing up - no mean task after a few more glasses of wine! We then sat talking until it was time for bed.

The weather was still with us on Sunday and we enjoyed a two hour boat trip on the Broads - Wroxham to Horning. Our captain was a delightful man with a broad Norfolk accent, a wide knowledge of the Broads and its various wildlife plus a treasure trove of stories. The time passed all too quickly and it was soon time to disembark. After lunch we went to a place called Wroxham Barns - a craft centre - where we spent a happy time going in and out of shops and seeing some fascinating work. The shop Gill and I enjoyed very much was where a lady was handpainting all manner of articles in the style of that seen on the side of barges. We could have stopped and watched for hours. We also visited the plant stall and purchased several plants to bring home - thank goodness for cars!

We left there and returned to the centre and, after the final cup of tea, started off for the journey home. It was a really lovely weekend and our thanks go to John Mercer for organising it and arranging so many interesting things for us to see and do.

SOME THOUGHTS - AND FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE PLACE NAME LAMORBEY

by K. M. Roome

The following article was written by our good friend Miss Kitty Roome in 1976. It was produced in the Kent Local History Journal's No. 3 edition and I have gained permission from the Kent History Federation to reproduce it in our Newsletter with further work that Miss Roome has undertaken on the interesting place name of "Lamorbey". As you will see from her May 1993 article, this was prompted by a query from Jack Saunders as to whether she has gained any further knowledge on the subject - obviously not for the want of trying. The Society is indebted to Miss Roome for her work for the origin of the place-name echoed in the name of the Society.....(F.I.O.)

"A North Kent Will by K. M. Roome, LL.B., Bexley Antiquarian Society.

In Bexley Parish Church (St. Mary's) there is a small memorial brass to a man named Thomas Sparrow, or Lamondby, who in his lifetime was a local landowner and sometime Deputy Reeve of the Manor of Bexley. In posterity he is a character shared in interest between the Bexley Antiquarian Society and the Lamorbey & Sidcup Local History Society. The Kentish Antiquary, John Thorpe, the younger, came to live at Bexley at High Street House next to the Church in 1752 and noted this brass. The figure, 13 inches long, is a man with bobbed hair and a bulbous nose, wearing a long fur-trimmed robe with wide sleeves. The Latin inscription at his feet states that he died on 21st October 1513.

Thomas made his will (P.R.O.Prob. 11/17 f. 24) on St. Catheryne's Even 1505. He described himself as Thomas Lamondby, otherwise Sparrowe. Two nephews, Cuthbert and John Lamondby, are named but no surnames are given for his parents and deceased brother, John. The reason for the alias of Sparrow remains unsolved; that name variously spelt appears several times in the Kent Lay Subsidy Role 1334/5 and two entries point to an earlier family in North Kent - Thos. Sperwe in the Hundred of Rokesle and Wm. Sparwe in the Hundred of Blakeheth - but Thomas may have been a northcountryman by origin. Agnes, who married James Goldwell of the Goldwells of Great Chart, is described in the Heralds Visitation of 1574 as "daughter of Thomas Lamaby of Lamaby in com...Note to search for Lamaby of ye north". The research of Mr. B. N. Nunns of the Lamorbey & Sidcup Society has produced Lamonby near Penrith in Cumberland, but completion of the full set of Place Name Society volumes is, of course, some time ahead yet.

Thomas appointed four executors, James Yarford, William Brokett, Goldsmyth, of London, his wife Catheryne, and William Inglishe, and three overseers, Sir John Pechye of Lullingstone, Richard Brok, Sergeant at the Lawe, and Maister Draper (perhaps William Draper of East Wickham). He made several pious gifts and directed with much detail a special mass on the Monday after Mydlent Sunday every year. Land to produce 13s. 4d. annually was to be appropriated by the executors partly to support this mass and also to pay the Peter Pence. If Bexley Church defaulted then Crayford or North Cray Churches were to benefit.

He left cash legacies and gifts in kind. Gold rings "written within Miseremini Mei" for the three overseers, and William Brokett, James Yarford and Lady Pechye; a gown each to John Hastlyn, Myles Thomlynson, Vicar of Bexley and William Kendall; nine servants, one of whom was William Kendall, were given one cow each of "them that be at Dertford", and another of the servants, Christofr' Leyff, also had two oxen. There is still a charity within the framework of the Bexley United Charities of a William Kendall arising from land at Brigden, one of the former hamlets of Bexley. According to Hasted it was created by a will in 1558. Thomas's main provisions were for his wife, Catheryne, and their only child Agnes. Catheryne was given "all my landes (excluding one house)" and "my household stuf" for life. The house "Symond Walsche dwellith in" was given to nephew Cuthbert and his descendants or nephew John. Walsche was another of Thomas's servants. It is conceivable that this house was at St. Mary Cray or Footscray, for in 1450 the horse of a Simon Walsche (perhaps an ancestor of the other Symond) was one of the eighteen stolen there.

Lands at Plumstead, Halford Strete, messuages in Woodstrete and Broken Wharf, London, leases of the Abbey of Lesnes' Manors at Dartford, Bawdewynes and Ochell (on the borders of Bexley, Wilmington and Dartford) and a new tilehouse on land at Bexley next to

the Abbey's lands, are all mentioned. Whether Halford Strete was Halfway Street hamlet on the borders of Lamorbey and Eltham had exercised many minds for some time, but recently a Lease of 1786 has been found re. "Halford Strete" otherwise Halfway Street" so the identity now seems proved.

Catheryne was liable to repair the lands and houses and to have "wood for hyr fyre but none to sell". Bexley was then a heavily wooded area and may be it was Thomas's intention to make it clear that she had only the customary limited use and the valuable timber kept for the future.

His provisions for Agnes were twofold. On her marriage she was to have part of the "household stuf" and all the plate; on her mother's death the houses and lands passed to her for life and then to her descendants, or if she had none then for charitable purposes. Agnes married James Goldwell and he and his heir built a house Lamienby Goldwell two miles westward of Bexley church between the hamlets of Hurst and Halfway Street. Eventually after several changes in ownership the building there now became the Adult Education Centre at Lamorbey adjoining the road Halfway Street near Sidcup Station. From about 1770 until almost living memory it was often know Lamb Abbey. The Lamorbey & Sidcup Local History Society meet there.

Whether antiquarian, John Thorpe, ever thought he was living in, or on the site of, a "Sparrow" house we shall never know. He didn't mention it. But there is a tenable Sparrow/Goldwell connection with High Street House. Thorpe "rebuilt this seat in 1761" (Hasted) having acquired it from the Austens about 1752, who had it from some time before 1666 and built a new front to it. The Manorial Survey of Bexley 1681 shows Lady Anne Austen in possession, with a marginal note "purchased of Richard Bourne Esq", who was connected by marriage with the Goldwells. Philipott in Villare Cantianum 1659 said "there is an old house by the margin of the river in Bexley town which was the seat of an ancient family in this parish called in Deeds Lamienby, alias Sparrow" and Hasted mentions the Goldwells as the owners of High Street House and that their arms were carved in stone on several chimney pieces in it. Extensive repairs and restorations within the last few years by the present owners, Mr. & Mrs. R. W. Gray, have yielded no sign of the chimney pieces, but they are not alone in feeling they are living in a property older in places than Mr. Thorpe's and that he didn't rebuild it completely. Deeds have survived at Kent Archives Office which show that the Thorpes built up a fair sized estate in the heart of Bexley around High Street House, but their settled estates in Kent were divided in the nineteenth century so very few Deeds are now current with it; otherwise more of the story of Mr. Thorpe's house might be known from original sources.

SOME FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE PLACE-NAME "LAMORBEY"

Bexley 1993

About twenty years ago Beverley Nunns and I did some detailed research on the Will of Thomas Sparrow, otherwise Lamondby, who died in 1513 - it being generally thought that the place-name "Lamorbey" derives from his original surname Lamondby. One of the points considered - but not resolved - in my article "A North Kent Will" was this local placename "Lamorbey"? Spurred on by Jack Saunders I have tried again.

In his Will, Thomas is named "Lamondby, otherwise Sparrowe". My own theory is that Thomas's wife Catheryne's maiden name was Sparrowe, and he took it by "Names and

Arms". It was not uncommon for a man to adopt the wife's name and arms as a condition in a marriage which involved substantial property from her side. In the 1608 Survey of the Manor of Bexley various lands are described as "formerly of Thomas Sparrowe", including High Street House, which site is accepted more or less as his residence.

In the Kent Lay Subsidy Roll 1334/5 the name Sparwe appears in the Hundreds of Ruxley and Blackheath. Unfortunately for this type of research, parish registers do not begin until the mid-16th century. At Footscray on 27th October 1588 Robarte Sparrowe married Alice Quidington, and this lady may be the "Annis Sparrow" who was buried there on 26th September 1603. She died of the plague. Elizabeth, daughter of Robert Sparrow, was baptised at St. Mary Cray on 17th August 1595. An entry in the St. Mary Cray Marriage Register of 1688, "Henry Abbott and Eliz. Sparrow", has been erased. On the 19th February 1726, again at St. Mary Cray, there is an entry in the Burials Register "Mr. Valentine Sparrow from Lewisham and London buried in a new vault in the chancel hung in mourning with ye pulpit desk, etc". There are no entries "Sparrow" in the Bexley Register.

In Thomas's Will his nephews Cuthbert and John Lamondby are named but there is no inkling of where they lived, either locally or elsewhere. Conceivably there could still have been a branch of the family locally in the 17th century. In the Bexley Registers "Lasebee" or "Leisenbee" appears between 1638 and 1688. There was Thomas Lesenbee who married Margaret Pierce in 1638 and had a family. Thomas Leisenby, presumably a son, was buried on 4th April 1688 described as a woodcutter. So far no trace of a family named Lamondby, other than Thomas's - but we are trying to look back into the Middle Ages, when records of ordinary people were sparse.

The only child of Thomas and Catheryne Sparrow was Agnes, who married James Goldwell of Great Chart. In the Heralds' Visitation of 1574 "first spotted by Beverley Nunns" she is described as "daughter of Thomas Lamaby of Lamaby of ye north". "Ye north" is a very wide field, but Beverley's original thought was Lamonby, which is near Penrith in Cumbria. Other possibilities are Lambley (Northumbria), Lambley (Notts), and Lazonby (Cumbria). The map in William Hutchinsons "History of the County of Cumberland" of 1794 shows Lammonby and Lammonby Gate about seven miles north of Penrith.

In the 1608 Survey of the Manor of Bexley, John Goldwell (son and heir of George Goldwell) is given as owner of "a messuage or dwelling-house called Lamaby, with barn, stable, etc.. The occupier was Margaret Goldwell, widow of George, which confirms the name of the property at that date. Lamorbey Adult Education Centre now stands on the site.

For reference, for somebody else who might try again later, I have consulted without positive results:

The Journals of Celia Fiennes, c.1697.
Signposts to the Past, Dr. M. Gelling
British Family Names, E. Barber 1903
Old English Place Names, Gosta Tengvik 1938
Kentish Place Names, J. K. Wallenberg
The Place Names of Kent, J. Glover

Harleian Society, East Anglian Pedigrees
History & Topography of Cumberland, T. F. Bulmer 1901

Should a stronger connection with Cumbria or elsewhere be established at some future time then an approach to the appropriate County Society might be worthwhile. K.R.

Note from Jack Saunders: Encouraged in turn by Kitty Roome's wealth of research, I can add a pennyworth of information. The Assistant County Archivist of Cumbria has written (in reply to my inquiry) that there are no Lamonby family records deposited there at the Record Office in Carlisle, but the surname appears many times in the International Genealogical Index for Cumberland and sometimes in 17th and 18th century probate indexes. He said too that the Secretary of the County Society is his colleague who works in the Cumbria Record Office in Kendal. I checked the Cumberland micro-fiche of the I.G.I. at Hall Place and indeed found many mentions of the surname Lamonby, plus variations of spelling. So that County seems the likely location of "Lamaby of ye north". It would be interesting to know why Thomas came south.

HOLY REDEEMER'S DIAMOND JUBILEE, 1993 (Days Lane, Sidcup)
by Bess Dzielski - Church Warden.

If your Church is a medieval foundation with a lengthy and impressive history, brasses, tombs and memorials and occupies several pages in Pevsner, then you tend to be quite blasé about its antiquity and celebrate only the centenaries. But when your Parish Church was set up in a thirties suburb and its only claim to fame is that it was the first Church to be built in concrete, then you don't take quite as much for granted.

Established in 1933 from part of the Parish of Holy Trinity, Lamorbey, Holy Redeemer discovered it could enjoy itself with a Golden Jubilee in 1983. A year's programme of celebrations was arranged, the history of the Parish was published, and Jubilee fundraising resulted in gifts to local charities. Flushed with the memory of this we decided on a Diamond Jubilee celebration for 1993.

The year opened as always with the Parish pantomime written and performed by Church members. Invitations to preach were sent to past clergy, resulting in a kind of Old Home Week every so often. We've had a Flower Festival with the theme 'Songs from the Shows' complete with the appropriate tapes playing, a Craft Fair which left the incompetents among us over-awed by the talents of our confreres, a super day out to Bourton-on-the-Water, spirits undampened by the stair rods which descended most of the day, (the evening pub-stop always very popular), a visit to Audley End, and a Quiz versus Lamorbey Residents' Association, also celebrating its Diamond Jubilee, in which we claim that our losing score was only a fraction behind! The Summer Fete made a record total in spite of the rain.

Still to come is the Parish Picnic and Cricket Match, teams captained by the Churchwardens - and I have no intention of revealing the feminine tactics of winning. We have a visit in October by the Bishop for the Consecration Festival when we hope to persuade him to plant a tree; there's a Barn Dance, a Dinner and Concerts to finish the programme up to Christmas.

Our biggest effort, however, has gone into the mission venture - to provide a pack of information on the Church of England and Holy Redeemer to every household in the Parish - all five thousand, two hundred and twenty two of them. A working party of Church members, writers and artists have compiled the leaflets, they are printed on the Church photocopier, the wallets are made up by members of the congregation and put through doors. The success and completion of this venture will depend on individual enthusiasm, but we've got the rest of the year to do it in.

We shall wind up with a New Year Social and after that contemplate what we shall do in fifteen years time because seventy-five would appear to be the next possible date for a celebration - but, of course, there's always a centenary to look forward to.

If you're in our part of the world, come along and join us.

**BOOK REVIEW: "SWEET THAMES" BY MATTHEW KNEALE,
published by Sinclair-Stevenson. ISBN 1-85619-181-8**

Janet Woods

It is quite obvious from conversations at Society meetings that many members do read history - both historical novels and books on historical periods or events. I wanted to bring this book to your attention because it is relevant to our Borough -as you will see.

"Sweet Thames" is set in London in 1849. There are epidemics of cholera in various parts of the country and it seems only a matter of time before an epidemic reaches London. There was a strong belief that cholera and other diseases were carried by a "miasma cloud", and the inhabitants of London fear the wind getting up and blowing the cholera across from one of the affected cities such as Bristol. At this time it is the main priority to find a solution to this terrible disease and the hero of this book - Joshua Jevons - knows he has the solution. (His solution is wrong, as is that of Mr. Edwin Sleak Cunningham, Chairman of the Metropolitan Commission for Sewers, whom Joshua tries so hard to influence - a character based on Edwin Chadwick the social reformer).

Joshua - an engineer - is hampered by his lack of money. He is a man from what was known as "a humble background". Although he had married his boss's daughter and had expectations of a more comfortable way of life with the influence that money brings, his father-in-law refuses to give any money to see his daughter lives according to her former status. The young couple therefore live in crowded rooms on Joshua's income assisted by one inebriated servant. Joshua has other problems as well as lack of income and lack of interest in his drainage scheme for London. His wife insists they live as brother and sister.

Now this leads to an embarrassment for your reviewer. There are "lily-white thighs" described in this book, but it is very weak beer compared with your average family viewing on television and it does assist the story line and its historical relevance. In his unhappiness and frustration Joshua is tempted into visiting a prostitute. At the front of the book there is a dedication to "Henry Mayhew, Victorian Journalist of genius without whom the book could not have been written". Joshua's visit to the prostitute, his visits to Thames-shore sites inhabited by sewer-scavengers, and his later search in the murky areas of London for his runaway wife all give a vivid picture of London in 1849. Matthew Kneale has used Henry Mayhew's book "London Labour and the London Poor" as a basis for the ordinary

Londoners in this book. He has used the search for the prevention of cholera to illustrate the missionary zeal of many engineers and reformers of the day.

The book is a good read - it is well written; it has a strong story line; there are moments of humour; and it will make you think. The epilogue to the book is called "The Real End", and the author gives a brief outline of the history of sanitation following the cholera epidemic of 1849 which killed 14,000 Londoners. He ends with a tribute to the work of Bazalgette and the Pumping Station at Crossness - a site within our own Borough.

HUMPHREY REPTON - LANDSCAPE GARDNER, 1752-1818

by Jennie Dakin

Jennie Dakin moved to this area from Essex. She was aware of the work of Humphrey Repton and of two scenes he painted from a cottage in Hare Street, Gidea Park, one showing a patch of ground beyond his front fence and a butcher's shop along the road: the second showing how he had taken the extra ground into his garden, planted a tree and successfully hidden the shop from view. She was therefore agreeably surprised to find that on moving to Blendon she was on the site of a former Repton landscape for in about 1811/12 John Smith (an ancestor of the present Queen Mother) had commissioned Repton to landscape the grounds of Blendon Hall. Although the landscape is obviously no longer there, Jennie wishes us to be aware that this great artist of garden design once created a beautiful garden in this locality....(F.I.O.)

Humphrey Repton's father was a prosperous collector of taxes at Bury St. Edmunds and later Norwich. In his early life Repton studied nature, gardening and botany. Following his marriage, and then the failure of a business venture in Romford, he used the help of influential friends to set himself up as a landscape architect - a profession much in demand with the very large country houses being built in the 18th century, and the "improvements" and alterations being made. He had intended to follow the style of Capability Brown, with long vistas and lawns right up to the house, but with experience and greater confidence he developed his own style and had his own followers. Repton was a leader of the designs in landscape known as the "picturesque", instead of long vistas there was "elegant informality" - broken skylines, surfaces which broke up the light, curving paths, irregular planting, small classical temples and follies - and particularly the addition of a Doric portico to an existing mediocre building.

England is famous for its contribution to the history of landscape gardening, and in this connection Humphrey Repton is one of its most famous sons. (The Victoria and Albert Museum has exhibited Repton's "Red Books" with their "before" and "after" paintings). The fact that there was such a landscape at Blendon is a proud part of our local history.

THE OVAL

by Frances Oxley

I purchased the following postcard this year on a stall at London Bridge Station. It seemed appropriate as the Project Group has been busy listing all the current shops of The Oval. The writing on the card, posted in the 1950s, suggests that the sender had just visited "The Oval" cricket ground.



AN OLD BIBLE
by Dr. John Seymour

There has been an old Bible in the family for as long as I can remember and recently I have been able to examine it in detail, in the hope that it would contain family history records. I began with the outside, then looked at every page, making notes of any interesting features.

The book is bound in brown leather on wooden boards, with an oval device embossed on the front cover, now all rather battered. There are two holes at the edge of each cover to allow cords of leather thongs to hold the book shut. This reminded me of Mr. Farley's illustrations of old books in his lecture on the History of the Book on 14 March 1990. The dimensions are 210 x 165 mm.

The text is in English and printed in two columns, with 60 lines to each column on paper now somewhat darkened and stained. The title page and the first few pages are missing. Evidently these included a calendar as the first existing page is headed. "November hath XXX. daies", and lists the psalms and lessons for Morning and Evening Prayer one each day. In the margin someone has written in what looks like Tudor or Stuart handwriting, "Richard Orchid his book", and this is followed by the calendar for December. There is then a section on the lessons for each Sunday throughout the year headed "The order howe the reft of holy Scripture (befyde the Pfalter) is appoynted to be read" and in the margin is written "John Withey....Jon J" in a type of handwriting similar to the previous one, where "...." indicates illegible words. In the margin of Sundayes after Easter is written "In my beginning god be my good.....John Witby John Witby", presumably the same man practising his handwriting. The next section is headed "The booke of common prayer, and adminiftration of the Sacramentes," and is similar to the present day BCP.

The Old Testament is in four parts, with the pages numbered only on the right-hand side, that is in folios. The first part contains Genesis to Deuteronomy, with 103 folios (206 sides) and five monochrome illustrations, including two maps. One shows the "fituation of

Gods Garden" and the other depicts the 40 years journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan. It ends with a blank sheet, on which is written very clearly in a large hand the only definite item of family history in the book: "John Seymour's book Octr.16.1809. John Seymour, was Born June 24th, 1765". Records show that he was the youngest brother of my 3xgt grandfather, Richard Seymour Junior and was christened in Bridport, Dorset on 28 July 1765. He was buried in the same town on 19 Feb 1844, aged 78 years. There is also a small piece of paper, torn from a larger sheet and marking this page. On one side is written May 27th 1855 and on the other side

And of 1000 horse.....
Pafsage in 3 hours...
Miles no more.....
in 4, the Boat...
25 minutes.

What a tantalising fragment! It appears to be concerned with travel, perhaps by sea and I wonder whether it may have been written by my great-grandfather George Frederick Seymour who was a master mariner in the 1850s.

The second part of the Old Testament, Joshua to Job, has 147 folios and two pictures but no handwriting. Part three runs from Psalms to the Prophets, with 159 folios and three pictures. All the books in these three parts are also in the Authorised Version.

The fourth part is the Apocrypha with 99 folios and a map of the Holy Land. In the margin of folio 37 in the Wisdom of Solomon is written one word, "cacadomon", which is not in my dictionary and at the end, after second book of Macabees we have "John Withy his book god give him gratd. therein to look.." The previous gentleman is now breaking into verse! The total number of folios in these four parts is 510, which is important when trying to identify the book.

After a table concerning the generation of Jefus Christe we come to the New Testament. This has on its title page "The newe Teftament of our Saviour Jefus Christe" followed by Romans 1:16 with the date 1575 and Cum priuilegio. There are 126 folios and a map of the Mediterranean showing "The Chart Cosmographie of the peregrination or journey of Saint Paul, with the diftance of the myles". On the last page of the New Testament it says, "Imprinted at London by Newgate Market, next unto Christes Church by Richard Iugge, printer to the Queene's Maiestie. Cum Priueligio Regiae Maieftatis". Below this inscription is the publisher's emblem or colophon, supported by the classical figures of Prvdencia and Ivsticia, one on each side.

The final part of the book follows immediately with a title page reading, "The whole booke of Psalmes collected into Englishe metre by Thom. Sternh, John Hopkins and others, conferred with the Ebrue, with apt notes to fing them withall". There are quotations from James 5:13 and Colossians 3:16, with a colophon for J. D. underneath which is: "At London. Printed by John Daye, dwelling over Alderfgate. An.1574. Cum Priuilegio Regiae Maieftatis, per Decenium?" The music for each psalm is printed on a single staff, with open diamond-shaped note heads and no bar lines. The page sides in this section are numbered consecutively, not in folios. There are 150 psalms which are followed by assorted prayers and the tune for the 100th psalm is the one known today as the Old Hundredth! The Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Twelve Articles of Faith

are also set to music. There is faint handwriting in some margins but on the blank sheet at the end is once again "John Seymour's Book Octr. 16. 1809". So there is no doubt about who owned it at that time.

These observations suggest that the book is from the late 16th century. If so, how would it fit into the evolution of the English Bible? According to Jenny Roberts, the first Bible to be printed in English was the New Testament produced in Germany by William Tyndale in 1525. In 1535 Tyndale was arrested for heresy and executed but in the same year Miles Coverdale published a complete Bible. This was followed in 1537 by Matthew's Bible and in 1539 by the Taverner Bible and the Great Bible.

Under Mary Tudor, Protestants were persecuted and a group of them who went to Geneva produced a Bible in 1560 when Elizabeth was Queen. However, it was not endorsed officially and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, ordered a revision, which appeared in 1568. There was a further revision in 1572 known as the Bishop's Bible, which formed the basis for the Authorized or King James version, first printed in 1611 and still much used today.

Some Bibles have been given special names, for example the Bishop's Bible is called the Treacle Bible because of its use of "tryacle" or "triacle" for "balm" in Jeremiah 8:22. In our Bible this verse reads, "...is there not triacle at Gilead? Is there no Phisition there?" and this confirms that it is the Bishop's version. Can we get any closer to the actual publication date? A useful source is by A. S. Herbert, who describes 2524 Bibles published between 1525 and 1961. Of these 23 are Richard Jugge Bibles, from 1548 to 1577, which cover the appropriate date.

The Bible with the best match is a second edition Bishop's version dated 1577. This has dimensions 200 x 142 mm (7.9 x 5.6") or quarto again, 60 lines per full column. 512 Old Testament folios, 126 New Testament folios and Metrical Psalms (1574). It also has the texts of "The order howe...", "The Booke of Common Prayer..." and "imprinted at London... by Richard Jugge...". It is said to agree closely with two of his other Bibles dated 1575 and 1573. The first one has a 1575 New Testament and Richard Jugge's a colophon. The Folio numbers in the four parts agree exactly with those in our Bible. The second is described as being bound in original boards with leather.

All of these features correspond reasonably well with our Bible. The missing pages would have contained a title page, a preface, a section starting "The whole Scripture..." and a Kalendar of 6 folios (12 pages), which is where we came in. This is as close as I can get without consulting an expert but it looks as though the Old Bible of the title was already over 230 years old when John Seymour acquired it in 1809!

Sources: Bible Facts, Jenny Roberts, Quintet Publishing Ltd. 1990. Historical catalogue of printed editions of the English Bible 1525-1961, A. S. Herbert, London. The British & Foreign Bible Society 1968.

HOME THOUGHTS by Margaret Gillies

I have added this letter as a postscript as it came after I had prepared the Newsletter and passed it for typing. The reason I decided to add the letter to an already very full

Newsletter was that it represents everything I hope the Society has come to mean to us. The activities of the Society should be stimulating, encouraging members to further activity and research, but at the same time we should be a "society", a group of friends who all interlink at some point in their lives. I think Margaret's letter fulfils this criteria and I am pleased to share it with you. (F.I.O.)

Dear Frances,

Belvedere - July 1993

I don't know whether your ears were burning during the past weekend, but you, Gill, and Eric Percival have been in our thoughts quite a lot. Joyce Renshaw, Eileen Hall, Alison and I made up our minds that we would have a weekend in Suffolk when we returned from the annual outing because we enjoyed it so much and wanted time to explore further and this was the weekend we selected.

Once again we started off in Hadleigh and although we have probably still not done the place justice, we were able to explore many corners we missed previously. We then went on to Lavenham - the site of a previous outing I seem to recollect; well worth further visiting although we had all been there several times before. Whilst there we enquired about accommodation for the night and rather surprisingly the only suitable place was back in Hadleigh. In spite of it being such a lovely place we were rather surprised to see empty properties and very few people about - no parking problems at all. We had time to spare before taking up our rooms so we decided to follow the signs to St. James Chapel. A bit like Bexley's regency bath house it appeared to have been released from someone's back garden and restored by English Heritage. There was not a soul around but we were able to let ourselves in to explore.

On our rather winding route back to the main road we found Boxford and it looked such a delightful village that we stopped to explore and we were so glad that we had not by-passed it on the main road. The houses incorporated so much that was beautiful from so many periods and the church was open and really most interesting. Our accommodation in Hadleigh was called "Odds and Ends" and was about 500 years old, with all mod. cons. but plenty of lovely old furniture and china were on display. We had an excellent meal a few doors along the road, also in oak-beamed splendour. On Sunday we went off to Long Melford, we admired the church and hospital but didn't go in as there was a service at the time. We didn't walk quite all the way along the main road, but very nearly. Everything looked so clean and cared for and the whole atmosphere was really pleasant. Once again we were able to lunch in a suitably oak beamed atmosphere!

In the afternoon we explored Melford Hall before going on to Sudbury so that this time we could call in Gainsborough's House. We thought it might have been a bit crowded as they were displaying a very recently acquired picture, but we had plenty of room and plenty of time and it was only as we were leaving that a very late arriving coach party took the place over.

I thought you would be interested to hear of our activities but this letter is mainly to thank you and the History Society for giving us the incentive to go out and add so much interest to our lives.

Yours sincerely,
Margaret Gillies

Lamorbey
& Sidcup
LOCAL
HISTORY SOCIETY