

FOXLEY

Lamorbey & Sidcup

LOCAL
HISTORY SOCIETY



Newsletter
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Contents

	Page
Editorial	1
Obituaries	2
Through All The Changing Scenes of Life by Dr.John Mercer	2
Happenings of Fifty Years Ago by Mr.Eric Percival	3
London's Lost Treasures by Mrs.Jennie Dakin	3
The Secret Garden in Kent by Mrs.Bess Dzielski	5
Visit to Australia by Mrs.Gertie Burns	6
A Day at Hampton Court by Mrs.Liz Fleet and Miss Frances Oxley	6
Following The Archbishop's Route by Mrs.Janet Woods	7
Boating on Barton Broad by Mrs.Bess Dzielski	8
From the Archives by Mr.Eric Percival	9
Where Was Tregilsoe ? by Dr.John Seymour	10
A Review of "Medieval Bexley" by Miss Frances Oxley	11
Society Ode by Miss Iris Morris	12

A warm welcome to you all at our new venue. It will be strange not meeting at Lamorbey Park which for so many residents (over successive generations) has meant so much. A place where they completed or added to their education, indulged in their hobbies, all within a house and grounds of historic importance. Our President, Mr. Harry Ingram was the first principal of the Adult Education Centre and still lives in the Coach House in the grounds. Our member, Mrs Betty Martyn was one of those attending classes in the centre's first year. Many of us will remember with nostalgia the Saturday afternoon schools when perhaps a hundred people would attend especially if the lecture was on a popular subject. Coupled with the lectures we remember the afternoon teas..... These in my time were provided by Mrs. Phyllis Nash and her colleagues. What a feast for the eyes initially and then the partaking of it all. I can remember when giving society notices, if advertising a Saturday School, I would remind members of the famous "Nash Teas". We all have our memories of Lamorbey. Our Society has met there since its inauguration forty two years ago. Now we begin a new era, putting down our roots at Alma Road - the other side of the railway tracks. For some of you it will be an easier journey which is a bonus point. When informed of our removal from Lamorbey, members were adamant that the Society would flourish in its new abode. That being the case, I wish it good health and happiness in its new home. We can now expand the membership as we shall meet in a larger hall - another bonus point. Nevertheless we shall not lose sight of Lamorbey. There is a new Principal at Rose Bruford College who as you might have seen in the press wishes local residents to be part of the consultation process of the demolition of the portacabins within the grounds. At a meeting in September with the Principal, Mr. Ely, I shall represent our Society together with the Civic Society. It is encouraging that Lamorbey will not be a closed book to us all.

Our dear Vice-President, Mr. Edwin (Pip) Hayward passed away in April 1994. He was a true servant of the Society, having been its Chairman and a lecturer of no mean ability on campanology, windmills, oasts and any subject at all Kentish. Not only did he lecture to our Society but many within quite a wide area. My first memory of Pip is at a Society meeting when he taught us how to count sheep. (No - by no means did he send us to sleep).. Our Chairman, Miss Iris Morris, wrote to his Widow, Maybelle and I am sure neither of them will mind if the letter is repeated later on in this newsletter.

Mrs. Kath Bidwell was with us on our Annual Outing to Maidstone and Charing on 7th May, so we were amazed when we learnt of her death only a few weeks later. She will be missed within the Society as she was one of the drivers (although in her eighties) bringing members to meetings. An obituary has been written by Mrs. Nash.

In our last newsletter I commented on the indomitable and courageous spirit of Mrs. Irene Pile after the death of her husband, Leonard. She unfortunately became the victim of cancer and passed away in January of this year. At her funeral service at Eltham Crematorium people from various organisations came forward and spoke most warmly and lovingly on her life.

It was such a pleasure that due to the lessening of her family commitments Iris was able to be part of our outing this year. We all got thoroughly wet whilst being conducted around Charing but this didn't matter to Iris for she was just so happy being with us after such a long time.

Our thoughts are with both Philip and Phyllis Nash as he became so very ill whilst they were on holiday at Lee-on-Solent. He has now been transferred to Greenwich Hospital.

The Blackfen and Halfway Street book has now sold out and we have already broken even with "Sidcup Remembered". As there was so much unpublished material remaining from Sidcup Residents we are publishing in the Autumn a second "Sidcup Remembered". This will be the first in a series of monographs. I am so pleased that we can number ourselves

amongst the active local history societies.

My thanks are once again due to all the members who have contributed to this current newsletter.

Frances Oxley - Editor and Hon. Secretary.

LETTER TO MRS HAYWARD ON THE DEATH OF MR. HAYWARD.

On behalf of Lamorbey and Sidcup Local History Society I would like to express my sympathy for your loss of Pip. The phrase that comes to mind every time I think of him is "a true gentleman". He was such a kind, courteous and gentle man. I remember how, many years ago, he would escort me from Lamorbey to my gate - gently taking my elbow at each kerb and releasing it only when we were safely on the opposite pavement.

His lectures were always full of interest and his enthusiasm for all things Kentish shone through as he spoke. He gave his total support to the Society: coming to meetings even when his hearing was so bad that it must have been difficult for him to understand the full gist of the talks.

He was always generous with his time and the full attention he gave to all he had conversation with endeared him to everyone he met.

As a Society we were saddened by his long and debilitating illness but now I am sure, as three of his present joys: he will be his old self again; able to watch lovingly over you and visit his "Holy City" at will. (Canterbury)

I.E. Morris - Chairman.

On Monday, 7th June, 1994, Mrs. Kathleen (Kath) Bidwell, a loyal member of the Society, passed peacefully away in Queen Mary's Hospital after a short illness.

She was a quite and caring person, always ready with a helping hand. Kath had a good word for everyone. A keen naturalist and gardener, she gained great pleasure walking her dog in the Meadows and tending her garden; following both these pursuits until a few weeks before her death. Kath will be sorely missed by our Society and others.

Mrs P. Nash.

"THROUGH ALL THE CHANGING SCENES OF LIFE" (Nahum Tate 1652 - 1715)

The Society is this year changing its venue from Lamorbey Park to Bexley Adult Education College in Alma Road but I do not suppose there will be any demand from members to change the Society's name. This change has set me thinking about change in general. Every generation sees change. As one gets older it is essential not to be a "stick-in-the mud", but to ask oneself if any new development should be accepted as potentially good (or at worse neutral) or as something to be opposed as definitely bad. As students of history we know that what one age accepts as normal is regarded as abnormal by a later age. Change is the very stuff of historical study. Let me suggest what might be regarded as the two biggest changes in our culture over the last two hundred years - with one being related to the other. When we went to Hampton Court last May we were lucky enough to be entertained by actors playing historic roles. What became clear was the finely graded hierarchy of court life with elaborate etiquette. The Tudor Court was grounded in recognition of status, the Court of William and Mary, too, observed fine grades of social distinction. These gradations were mirrored beyond the Court in society at large. To the early Victorians, too, for example, it was inconceivable that the labouring poor should be educated beyond the three R's. God had made an unequal society, the social "betters" should enjoy the riches of this world whilst the poor should await their treasure in heaven. Today, social deference has almost gone. "Jack is as good as his master!" In fact, to my mind, the abandonment of deference has gone too far. There is little respect for anyone or anything. With the decline of deference has gone the

respect for the elderly, for the monarchy, for the dead, for the police, for teachers. If deference had been grossly unfair, lack of it now in almost any degree leads to lack of manners and lack of responsibility. Everything is a joke. Nothing is taken seriously. Values are what the individual regards as important to him or her. We live in a society of individualism in which the community is only there to be broken and abused. Some fifty years ago G.D.H.Cole wrote "The History of the Common Man". Today the common man has become the vulgar man. We live in a society of extraordinary vulgarity in which the most private acts are dug out by a raucous press and blurted out for all to see and hear. Fifty years of "secondary education for all" has produced several millions who read "The Sun" every day. If this diatribe of mine is wholly negative let me redress the balance a little. No one wishes to go back to the stifling and monstrous social structure of the distant past. The media for all its faults does make us aware of abuses that were once covered up or even unknown to most. The monarchy has brought much of public disquiet and loss of authority upon itself. The police can be corrupt and teachers could be petty tyrants. Yet when all that is said, I do feel that loss of public manners and growth of public coarseness are the biggest changes that has taken place in my lifetime.

John Mercer.

This is a very strong article but one which many of us would agree. Editor.

HAPPENINGS OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

This year (1994) we remember D Day - on 6th June 1944 allied forces commenced their invasion of Europe.

The Sidcup Times published on 9th June was a very slim publication, here are some of the items printed:-

"Where to get your new ration book" either the Food Office at Carlton Road or Lamorbey Library, The Oval.

The West Kent Electric Co. (who supplied Footscray) encouraged its customers to save fuel until victory was won.

A joint announcement from the British railways (GWR, SR, LMS and LNER) asked us to travel light and reminded everyone that government restrictions limited each person to 100 lbs of luggage.

The Ministry of Information cautioned the public to avoid careless talk. (This advert was sponsored by the Brewers' Society)..

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food warned us to protect our potatoes against potato blight, and we were told that the maximum amount of solid fuel we could buy for May and June was 10 cwts.

The magistrates courts were busy, a woman from Chislehurst was fined 60/- with three guineas costs for obtaining milk by false deception. A Mottingham man was fined 10/- for wasting electricity at Pearkes Stores and a 25 year old printer charged with stealing a bicycle.

During the forthcoming week our two Sidcup cinemas were showing "Buffalo Bill" (Regal) and "Melody Inn" at the Odeon.

John Ames, the Cleansing, Transport and Salvage Officer for the Chislehurst and Sidcup UDC received a letter from the ADC to General Montgomery wishing him well in organising a book drive for books, which would later be distributed to the forces.

Clifford O'Conner Davies arrived to be the Curate at Holy Trinity Church.

Eric Percival.

LONDON'S LOST TREASURES

Over the last 170 years many of London's old landmarks have disappeared, (not counting war

damage) but can sometimes be discovered in other places.

The first stone bridge over the Thames, built 1176-1209 by Peter de Colechurch lasted for over six hundred years. It was 900' long with nineteen pointed arches - one with a drawbridge - and had buildings on it, houses, shops and a chapel.

A new bridge, designed by John Rennie, was built by the side of it in 1824-31 and the old one then demolished 1831-2. Two stone alcoves still exist in Victoria Park, Hackney and the other in the grounds of Guy's Hospital. Some of the stones were used to build St. James, Warden, on the Isle of Sheppey but in less than one hundred years part of the cliff fell into the sea together with the church and the trees.

With the increased road traffic after World War II another bridge to take six lanes was built between 1968 and 1972 and Rennie's bridge went to Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

In 1811 - 1817 John Rennie had also built the first Waterloo Bridge to be followed by the present bridge by Sir Giles G.Scott in 1944. This time much of Rennie's bridge went to various parts of the Empire. Some stonework is in the balcony of Parliament House in Perth, Western Australia, also one of the balustrades. Two more went to colonists in Swaziland and lamp standards designed by Professor Cockerell to Nova Scotia, Rhodesia, Sierra Leone, West Indies and elsewhere.

A graceful suspension bridge was designed by Brunel 1841-5 as a pedestrian bridge from Hungerford Market, on the present site of Charing Cross. However, with the coming of the railways it soon had to be replaced by the present Hungerford Bridge. London's loss was Bristol's gain. Several attempts had been made to bridge the Avon at Clifton without success. A new contractor bought the chains of Brunel's bridge and in 1864 succeeded in completing the lovely Clifton Suspension Bridge.

Swanage in Dorset can claim to have more of London's discarded treasures than any other town. John Mowlem, founder of the London contractors in 1822 and his nephew George Burt who joined him later came from Swanage. They were able to acquire discarded treasures at bargain prices.

A Victorian Gothic clock tower was erected in 1854 near the south end of London Bridge as a monument to the Duke of Wellington but was soon in the way of traffic. Mowlem's firm took it down and it was re-erected in 1868 in the grounds of the present Grosvenor Hotel in Swanage.

When the old Mercers Hall was taken down about 1870, the carved entrance, dated 1670, designed by a pupil of Wren, was taken by Burt for the front of his new Town Hall. In the streets are parts of balustrading and several stone urns from the vanished church of St.Michael, Queenhithe as well as some old City of London lamp posts.

The large Globe, though not a London possession, was made in Mowlem's yard in Greenwich and erected in 1887 by George Burt. Even old London bricks, no longer needed as ballast for the sailing ships were left on the beach. On a recent visit my daughter picked up a piece, now a large, smooth, rounded, red pebble shaped by the waves over the decades.

A column erected at Seven Dials in 1694 was pulled down in 1773 (according to Arthur Mee during a riot) thinking to find treasure at the base. It was bought by a Weybridge builder and laid in his yard until it was bought by townfolk and set up as a memorial to a much loved Duchess of York.

Temple Bar, designed by Wren stood across Fleet Street at the entrance to the City of London. Towards the end of the last century because of increasing traffic it was taken down and lay in a builder's yard for ten years. It was rescued by Sir Henry Meux and re-erected as the entrance lodge to his home in Theobalds Park near Waltham Cross.

A statue of Queen Anne, carved by Bird in 1712 stood in front of St.Paul's Cathedral but it was neglected and before long, noses, legs and other parts of the body were missing from the Queen and her attendants. It became an eyesore and was sent to a stoneyard. There it stayed for eighteen years until Mr.A.J.C.Hare bought it and installed it in his garden in Holmhurst, near Hastings. Then the London authorities found that they liked the statuary and engaged Richard Belt to reproduce Bird's statue and place it where the original had stood.

Aldershot possesses a large bronze statue of Wellington on horseback by Matthew Wyatt. It once stood near Hyde Park Corner at the top of Constitution Hill before the present arch now crowned by the Quadriga. The Statue, a gift by Lord Michelham in memory of

Edward the Seventh was taken to pieces and drawn to Aldershot by horses.

Other well known landmarks are still in London but have changed their address. The Marble Arch built in the classical style, of marble from Michael Angelo's quarry in Carrara, Italy, was set up by John Nash about 1825 at the entrance to Buckingham Palace. It was moved to its present position in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition. A statue of George the fourth by Chantrey was made for Trafalgar Square but never placed there.

Wren's church, St.Antholin, stood in Budge Row near its junction with Watling Street until its demolition in 1870 to make way for the new Queen Victoria Street. Previously the spire had been replaced after lightning damage many years before and Wren's spire was taken away by Robert Harrild, the printer and manufacturer of printing machinery. He had built Round Hill House in Forest Hill about 1824 and the spire became an ornament in his garden. The house was demolished in 1964 and the spire became an ornamental feature in the centre of a housing development built over the garden. Part of the price received for the site of old St.Antholins was used to pay for the building of St.Antholins at Nunhead in 1877 and two bells and an altar piece from Wren's church were incorporated in the new church.

Eros in Piccadilly Circus was moved to the Embankment Gardens when the underground station was being built but was returned sometime later.

When the South Bank was being redeveloped before 1951, an old brewery was demolished, but the brewery lion was saved at the request of King George the Sixth (so I have been told). It is made of coad stone, an artificial stone impervious to weather and atmosphere. The large lion is now crouched on a plinth at the south eastern end of Westminster Bridge outside County Hall.

Euston Station was the first great terminus in London. At its entrance was a gigantic thirty foot arch of tapering, fluted Doric columns, one of the grandest specimens in England of the Greek style. The architect was Philip Hardwick and was said to have cost £30.000 - some of the blocks weighing thirteen tons. It was removed for modern traffic about 1961 and a recent TV film showed the stones piled up and overgrown.

Jennie Dakin.

Please note - Jennie is one of our octogenarian members !

Editor

THE SECRET GARDEN IN KENT

When the new version of "The Secret Garden" arrived on the cinema screens, residents of Rolvenden in Kent braced themselves for another influx of fans, for Great Maytham Hall near the village was for some years the home of Frances Hodgson Burnett, author of the childrens favourite published in 1911. Legend has it that the famous secret garden, transferred to Yorkshire in the book, was based on the rose garden at Maytham.

The present Maytham Hall designed in 1910 by Sir Edwin Lutyens is built around the remains of the earlier eighteenth-century gabled house rented by the author from 1898 to 1907. The neo-georgian building is now divided into separate apartments.

The creator of Little Lord Fauntleroy, Frances Eliza Hodgson was born in Manchester in 1849. Family fortunes degenerated when she was a child and the family emigrated to America in 1865. The tide turned with the publication of her first novel "That Lass of Lowries" and success followed with both adult and children's books. She became a great celebrity, commuting regularly across the Atlantic. An unhappy marriage to Dr.Swan Burnett ended in divorce - no easy thing in 1898 - and eventually she settled for some years at Maytham Hall.

Here in Kent she found her metier. A strong, somewhat dictatorial character, she was happy and enjoyed life as the lady of the manor, distributing kindness and charity and enjoying the company of other celebrities - Henry James at Rye, Ellen Terry at Smallhythe and Rudyard Kipling at Rottingdean. She joined in all the village activities including the Mothers' Union and in later years her letters show she was touched to realise how much she was appreciated.

The rose garden at Maytham was overgrown but she worked on her knees, weeding and

planting to revive the neglected hideaway. With its new lease of life she could sit in the secret rose garden, a large rouged woman, in a big hat and white dress writing her bestsellers.

A second marriage to a neurotic man ten years younger than herself was not happy either. Money troubles and nervous stress led to a breakdown and separation, but she battled on and continued to write almost up to her death in 1924.

Most of her work is out of print and dated, but "The Secret Garden" the story of lonely and unhappy children who find happiness - with its emphasis on strength of character and love of nature - reads as freshly as it did eighty years ago.

Bess Dzielski

Keep an eye on *The Lady* as Bess has had articles published from time to time.

Editor.

VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

During the early part of the year I visited Australia as I have relatives living in Melbourne. It is the second largest city of Australia being named after the then Prime Minister of England. It lies on the river Yarra, nicely situated, with beautiful parklands and very wide streets which are regularly planned. Restaurants of every description are on the river bank. I did most of my travelling around on a tram but you can travel on buses and trams with the same ticket for two hours or buy an all day one. These can be bought at newspaper shops or on the vehicle. Whilst there I visited Ballarat, the well known gold mining town. The Museum was interesting as it showed you how the gold was mined. In one town everybody was dressed in costumes of the 1800's and the school house was shown at this period. This gave us tourists an idea of what it was like living there at this early period of Australian history. The Eureka flag was also on show in the local museum. This reminded us of the Eureka stockade that was erected by the miners after three of them had been arrested for protesting of ill treatment. I had several happy weeks with my relatives but all too soon I was on my way back to the UK.

Gertie Burns

Topical Note. Bess Dzielski, Angela Everett and myself were in Westminster Abbey only a few months ago at the consecration of the new Bishop of Ballarat, the Ven. David Silk, who had previously been a clergyman at the Good Shepherd, Blackfen. Editor.

A DAY AT HAMPTON COURT

The Society visited Hampton Court on April 23rd (1994) which was of course St. George's Day. Some members sported red roses and others the badge of St. George. When we set off from Sidcup it was raining heavily but during the day many of us were able to sit in the grounds and have our lunch. We realised that although we were in the midst of so much history from the previous centuries we could hear the twentieth century as planes were overhead every moment on their way to and from Heathrow Airport. (the magnificent outline of Concord was spotted by some members).

Hampton Court encompasses five hundred years of English history, begun by Cardinal Wolsey in the sixteenth century. He eventually passed it as a gift to Henry the eighth which began its long association with successive Kings and Queens.

In 1986 fire had ravaged the King's Apartments and this then enabled the authorities to open up further areas to the public, in particular the Tudor Kitchens. Visitors are offered the choice of six determined routes - each one taking you through a particular period. We decided to start our tour by visiting the Kitchens, claimed to be the finest of their time anywhere in the world. In today's society where every lady wishes to look like Twiggy, it is hard to imagine the gargantuan meals eaten by the people of Tudor times. They ate their

fill of venison, boar, pheasant, peacocks and swan, all prepared at the Palace butchery. The kitchens contained large open hearths where meat was roasted on spits. Delicately prepared sweets would be cooked over small braziers. The Great Hall where the feasting took place was quite a distance away and so a succession of serving boys would take the food through to the hall.

We then went on to Henry the VIII's State Apartments where we were given an interesting talk by a gentleman dressed in Tudor costume. (Similar to that of the Tower of London's Yeoman of the Guard) At the time, Henry was one of the most important Kings of Europe and the Great Hall, the Watching Chamber and the Chapel Royal all testify to the splendour of the Tudor Court. Later on we saw a painting of the King, meeting the French King, Francois at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in France. Both Kings and their entourages looked sumptuous.

After the reign of Elizabeth the first the Stuart Monarchs continued to inhabit the Palace and then during the reign of William and Mary much of the old palace was demolished and Sir Christopher Wren was commissioned to build a more modern palace. Wren's style of architecture is seen at its best on the east facade which faces on to the Home Park. The Maze was planted by William's gardeners in the 1690's and still gives pleasure and entertainment to visitors today.

After the death of Queen Caroline in 1737 the Court ceased to visit or reside at Hampton and it was in 1838 that Queen Victoria opened the Palace to the public and after the great fire of 1986, her descendant, Elizabeth II re-opened the refurbished King's Apartments.

We thoroughly enjoyed our day at the Palace and after the sun came out were able to explore the very attractive gardens.

Our thanks for organising the trip go to the outing secretaries.

Liz Fleet and Frances Oxley.

FOLLOWING THE ARCHBISHOP'S ROUTE

The pleasure of this outing was that it gave a fresh view of areas that most of us know well. The focus of the day were the palaces at Otford, Maidstone and Charing, - three of the stopping places on a five day journey the Canterbury Archbishops would have regularly made between Lambeth and Canterbury. Some of our party were fortunate in having already visited Lambeth Palace with the Society previously. Gill Brown made sure we were aware of the historic significance of Croydon when the coach passed through on our visit to Hampton Court recently, and we finished our Annual Outing with a view of the Cathedral at Canterbury as we skirted the town to join the motorway. So we can stretch a point and say we have done the whole route!

On such a wet day it was possible to sympathise with the Archbishops who made the five day journey on horseback. Even though the Archbishop would have been given the most protection by his retinue and suffered the least discomfort, it was all relative. He would often have been cold, wet and uncomfortable - whereas our party had a motorcoach to hand and modern protective clothing. We stopped briefly at Otford and saw the cottages built into what remains of a wall of the former palace. Otford is a very pretty village so close to us (you can get a bus from Bexleyheath), and stopping at Otford helped us to visualise that although we pop up and down to Charing Cross in half an hour or so, historically our Borough was well in to Kent. This stop helped us to get the day in perspective.

The Heritage Centre at Maidstone is impressive, and every effort is made to help the visitor see the palace, Maidstone and those journeys to Canterbury as part of a living history. We saw a diorama of John Ball in prison following the Peasants Revolt and thought of our local associations with Wat Tyler - Dartford, Blackheath etc. We gained a good idea of the whole structure of the palace and the visitor could spend time admiring the herb garden. As you know, herbs were used not only in cooking and for deadening smells, but more importantly a diorama of the apothecary at work reminded us of the role of the Church as the provider of "healthcare" to the poor in the middle ages.

Moving on from Maidstone we were required to make good use of our imaginations when standing in the ruined Great Hall at Charing. In Charing we were fortunate to be allowed to visit a private, working farm. The farm house is an integral part of the ruins of the former palace. We examined the walls and the probable design of the palace and then we stood in a barn which smelt of the stacked hay, and we were surrounded by bits and pieces that farmers hang on to, and yet when we used our imaginations we were able to join the Archbishop feasting in a smoky, dirty atmosphere with his large retinue of servants dashing to and from the fire, serving the Archbishop and his guests with meat and drink. Somewhere behind the hay was a block in the wall designating where the Archbishop should sit.

Charing is a lively village with thriving good shops, a school and a beautiful church which dates from the twelfth century. It would have been the last stop in that five day journey and the church has a close association with the Cathedral. As well as being a beacon of the Christian faith through the centuries, this church also has its signs of pagan belief so common in the older English parish churches. Charing is particularly proud of the carvings on treasured pews indicating that once, the population, in their ignorance and tenuous hold on life, took the precaution of acknowledging demons, and as we later toured the town we were entertained with details of the contents of "witches bottles" once used in the houses to ward off these unwelcome visitors. But we were particularly delighted by the pew mats in the Church, so beautifully made and donated by the current congregation as part of a living church with a marvellous history.

We owe a great debt to the Charing Local History Society. They provided six guides to introduce us to the Church, the palace and the village. After a good session at the Church and at the remains of the Palace we divided into four groups and were led around the village. We were given a great deal of information about the buildings, which were preserved and protected but also loved and lived in. Some by the village green were only just getting electricity. At a quick glance you would say Charing is a Georgian village, but there are marvellous examples of sixteenth and seventeenth century houses, and many of the elegant eighteenth century facades hide a jumbly past behind their well-proportioned frontage.

Obviously there was plenty of opportunity during the day to obtain guidebooks and to make a detailed study of something of particular interest to each individual, but my outstanding memory of the day was the sense of continuity which this trip brought out. We saw the potential for many a pilgrimage of our own, and the demons lost the battle when they decided to keep us at bay by raining on us all day. Many thanks to Frances and Gill for their meticulous arrangements, and to Frances for such an imaginative idea for an outing. I am sure they will have expressed our gratitude to Charing Local History Society - not only for the introduction to the history of their village, but also for that splendid tea.

Janet Woods.

BOATING ON BARTON BROAD.

As a born "townee" I accept that I am ignorant of most things "green" - growing, flying or swimming, so on the visit to Barton Turf I was prepared to be talked to, instructed and lectured. Norwich Cathedral, Castle, Heritage Village, Beeston Hall I coped with admirably. They were all old, inanimate, historical and had dates. Just my scene.

However on Sunday morning we boarded ship - or, at least, piled into what appeared to be a remarkably small, positively cockle-shell-like motorboat which swayed alarmingly as we stepped gingerly aboard. We had all been equipped with buoyancy aids - posh words for life-jackets. Liz, our guide, beamed with a reassuring cheerfulness and we set off on a journey reminiscent of *The Wind in the Willows*. Chugging gently at no more than four miles an hour we glided past riverbank and reeds. The cognoscenti among us has brought binoculars and cameras and commented knowledgeably on the wildlife. I sat in a pleasant haze, gazing at ducklings following their parent in a v-shaped formation. I was told that the one with a white stripe was a coot, saw Greylag geese with goslings and a red-crested grebe which had caught not one, but two fish in its beak. My ignorance did not go unnoticed. When I asked what the line of large square posts was for Alan Godfrey explained gravely that they were there for the birds to rest on. However, I did see eventually by their regular position they

were marking channels through the Broad. The right of way on water is the opposite to that of the road. And later, I realised that what sounded like " turntables" was actually "tern tables". (It's a bird).

It was easy to see how Egyptian geese came by their name with their cleopatra-like markings. We saw heron nests high in trees, another tree supported a large parasitic growth mistletoe. A bat flew overhead, (there again, I thought they always flittered around at night in the company of vampires).

There were acres of marsh reed which are harvested to provide thatching material and a large patch of water lilies showed the purity of the water.

We passed an island with private moorings and thatched houses of such a size that one wondered how palatial must the owners' town houses be if these were weekend retreats. The watchers among us sighted goldfinches, swallowtails, butterflies, and I realised what was skimming in front of me was a dragonfly. A heron swooped in flight and a water snake, coiled and indolent, drifted by.

The occupants of a small number of boats we passed greeted us cheerfully and we waved back enthusiastically. Apparently Barton Broad enjoys peace and quiet with a respite from visitors as there is no pub in the village for holiday makers to enjoy in the evening.

At the far end of the Broad was a dredger; this is a regular operation of the Forth Bridge variety and the mud excavated and put on the bank makes very fertile earth. We explored both arms of the Broad, or should it be forks?, chugging along steadily and quietly, full of sun and peace.

We tried to recall the Ducks' Ditty -

All along the backwater

Through the rushes tall

Ducks are a-dabbling

Up tails all!but could not remember much more.

But Rat is quite right, you know, "There is nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing - about - in - boats".

So, thank you very much John Mercer, for enabling us, amongst many other things to mess about in a boat.

Bess Dzielski.

This was part of the programme of the second weekend visit to Barton Broad. Editor.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

In 1971 the French educational publishers, Librairie Hachette published a booklet entitled "Life in a London Suburb". This was aimed at French students of English and was described as being 'second grade' i.e. having a vocabulary of 1500 words. It was written by Norman Hill who is a local resident and lecturer in education and has illustrations by Robert Blayney who taught art at Lamorbey. The author begins by asking the simple question 'Why Sidcup' and gives the obvious answer 'Because I live here'.

It is now twenty three years since publication and this shows in the many references to buildings and shops which now no longer exist. On page ten there is a drawing and description of Station Road from a radio shop (Brockies) and clearly shows the Station Hotel. Later, when writing of the development of Sidcup an advertisement is reproduced asking for building land, especially older houses with large gardens, the result of this can be seen today in the many blocks of flats around the High Street. Another change we see is in the section on the library which speaks of a borrower's ticket - in the illustration there is not a bar code scanner in sight! Mr.Hill wrote to local manufacturers asking for details of their products , some of these are now history - ITT/KB, Black & Edginton and Rank Electronic Tubes. However Envopak is still with us (well, they were in February 1994). Sadly there is also a piece on the Arts Centre in Grassington Road, now demolished, another victim of progress. Mention is made of the Outdoor Activities Centre at Footscray Meadows where in 1970, 10,269 people used the site, over half from outside the Borough and included 350 French,

200 Germans and 130 Dutch.

Many shops which have now disappeared are mentioned in the book - W.H.Potter, Lanes, Bird Cage, M.H.Tripp, Willimotts, Eric Thomas and Leakes. Can you remember the goods they sold?

Entertainment was very much in evidence at the time, David Copperfield, followed a week later by Hello Dolly, were to be shown at the ABC cinema in the High Street. At the Christmas Concert given by the Sidcup Symphony Orchestra the Mayor and Mayoress played the toy drum and toy trumpet in the Toy Symphony. Local Societies were performing - *No, No Nanette*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, and *The Gondoliers*. Fund raising as today was a popular activity - the 9th Sidcup Scouts were having a jumble sale and St. Joseph's Convent (Hatherley Road) a fete. If you needed help, Pat Hornsby Smith, MP was available to assist. Many local societies are mentioned and the very last entry lists The Lamorbey and Sidcup Local History Society as having a talk on Christopher Marlowe by Dr.G.B.G.Bull.

Eric Percival.

This publication was donated to the Society by our President, Mr. Harry Ingram and Dr. Bull was, of course the first Chairman of the Society.

WHERE WAS TREGILSOE ?

Tregilsoe was a house in Sidcup, described in a letter I received from Mr. Tate of Longfield. He wrote it after reading my article in the North West Kent Family History Society journal about my grandfather, Ernest Seymour who lived at No.16 Crescent Road from 1891 to 1943.

Mr. Tate said that his first wife was born at Tresilgoe, Crescent Road, Sidcup in 1898 and he thought that the number was 30. Her father, Samuel Osborne, must have acquired the house soon after his marriage in 1894 and the family remained there until 1916/17 when they left the area. Tregilsoe was then requisitioned to accommodate workers at the Vickers armaments factory at Crayford. Mr. Tate and his then wife visited Sidcup round about 1955 to find her old home but they were unsuccessful and were told it may have been destroyed by a bomb in World War II. He enclosed a photograph of the house taken about 1910 and invited comments.

Since we live in Christchurch Road close to the point where it is crossed by Crescent Road this was interesting, especially as the house opposite ours, No.37, appeared almost identical to the one in the photograph. There was the road sloping downwards from left to right, as in the photo, but the house opposite lacked two bays on the north, or right-hand side. It looked likely that Tregilsoe was both on the slope of Christchurch Road and also in Crescent Road, which could only occur at the crossroads. It seemed that the problem could be approached by consulting both the available maps and Sidcup directories.

Large scale Ordnance Survey maps were to hand for 1897, 1908 and 1933, from Hall Place and Alan Godfrey. The 1897 map shows fourteen houses on the north side of Crescent Road, which were later numbered 2 to 28. So a possible place for No.30 was on the west side of Christchurch Road where there was a later extension of Crescent Road. However, in 1897 there was just a T-junction at the end of Crescent Road with part of Priestlands Wood on the other side. There was no house in the No.30 position, so it seems likely that Mr. Osborne had bought Tregilsoe around 1897 rather than in 1894. Christchurch Road had no houses at all and was called Manor Road.

The 1908 OS map does show the extension into Crescent Road West and houses on all four corners of the crossroads. Priestlands Park Road also follows its present loop from Manor Road to Christchurch Road and Priestlands Wood has now become Allotment Gardens and the Recreation Ground, usually known as the Rec.

The next step was to consult the Sidcup directories at Hall Place which are available for 1894, 1898, 1901, 1918 to 1939 and 1958/59. The alphabetical section of 1894 revealed no Osborne S. but in 1898 it stated "Osborne S., Campsie, Station Road", so this confirmed that the

Osbornes were in Sidcup but had not yet moved to Tregilsoe. By 1901 there were five Osborne entries, one of which was "Osborne S., Tregilsoe" but a search of the main directory lists failed to locate Tregilsoe in Crescent Road. Christchurch Road was not mentioned at all and there was no Tregilsoe in Manor Road either, although the house must have existed. After a long gap, we have in the 1918 alphabetical directory "Osborne S., Tregilsoe, Crescent Road". However, it is not listed under Crescent Road but appears instead in Christchurch Road as "Vickers Hostel, Tregilsoe". Thus Tregilsoe cannot be located from the directory in 1901, when it may have been the only house in Christchurch Road, but then everyone knew where it was. It then appears in two roads simultaneously in 1918! Hence the information for the relevant period did not solve the problem satisfactorily.

As a sideline I found eight Vicker's Hostels in Sidcup in 1918, one in Christchurch Road, two in Priestlands Park Road and two in St. John's Road. Sidcup is very convenient for travelling to work in Crayford which is probably why the hostels were there and no doubt elsewhere too.

Searching the later directories disclosed that the 1919 Tregilsoe entry is the same as for 1918 for both roads but in 1920 we have "Hornsby H.E., Tregilsoe" in Christchurch Road only. Here it stays for all subsequent years and in 1921 it is described as vacant. Then from 1922 to 1930 the entry reads "Perrin Wm. Alfred" to be replaced from 1931 to 1939 by "Mrs. A.W. Perrin". This confirms that Tregilsoe was in Christchurch Road and had been occupied by the Perrins long after the Osbornes had left. Houses are identified in the earlier lists by name only so I needed a numbering scheme to fix the location of Tregilsoe. Such a scheme does not appear until 1935, after the growth in the number of houses from none in 1894 and 1898, to one (Tregilsoe apparently) in 1901 and nine in 1918. It remains at nine until 1924 when it rises to 14 and 1935 there are 38, including one inexplicably omitted at No. 37. The numbers are not continuous, leaving room for future development and the odd numbers are on the west side.

From 1935 onwards Tregilsoe is at No. 47, Christchurch Road. Comparing the house names before 1935 with the named and numbered lists of 1935 and later shows that the earlier lists were in a completely random order. This makes them quite unsuitable for location purposes! Tregilsoe can be placed by counting from the junction with Priestlands Park Road, which is more easily done with a later complete list such as for 1939 and at the same time these entries can be compared with the 1933 map. This predates the building of two semi-detached pairs, No's 33 and 35 and No's 43a and b, showing six houses between Priestlands Park and Crescent Roads.

The last house in Christchurch Road is Tregilsoe on the south side of Crescent Road. On the north side of Crescent Road is indeed No. 30, Crossways, (previously called Osborne just to confuse matters) and inhabited by the splendidly named Mr. Gilbert-Lodge, who I can remember as being a very cheery character when I was a child in the 1930's. At that time Christchurch Road was not made up and was known as The Donkey Road, no doubt a reference to earlier occupants of the area!

Tregilsoe was not destroyed by bombing in World War II because I now realise that I have a personal memory of it in 1952. This was the year before Joan and I were married and we used to watch a new bungalow being built to replace an old house at No. 47 Christchurch Road. We would have liked to live in it but it was much too expensive. The previous house must have been Tregilsoe but by 1952 it had been unoccupied for some time. There would have been a good view over Sidcup from the bay windows on the north side that distinguished it from the similar houses still in the road.

John Seymour.

This is a lesson for researchers that you must not take hearsay for granted. Editor.

REVIEW OF MEDIEVAL BEXLEY BY PROFESSOR F DU BOULAY.

It is to my regret that due to other commitments I have only done a minimal amount of local history research.

You realise the dedication, time and scholarly knowledge necessary when you read Du Boulay's book on Bexley which was originally published by Bexley Corporation Public Libraries in 1961. This has now been updated by the author and as time has now marched on published by Bexley Libraries and Museums. The 1961 edition has been out of print for some time which was a great pity as the work can only be described as one of the most important reference books for the borough's local history societies. The Parish Church had until comparatively recently a far flung parish which embraced much of the Sidcup area and Bexleyheath. Many of us therefore find that our early history is bound up in Bexley Village and Du Boulay's work is our standard text book together with that of our dear Peter Tester's "Bexley Village" which brings us up to modern times.

The second edition of "Medieval Bexley" is well presented with a particularly good front cover which has a photograph of St. Mary's cleverly depicted without today's intrusions. The text has been updated in one or two sections by Professor Du Boulay himself as he says in the acknowledgements so much more research has been done into the Kentish past over the last thirty years. The book ranges from the 9th - 15th centuries and tells of the way of life over that period. The source material is from the ecclesiastical libraries of Canterbury and Lambeth, the Public Record Office and others. Can you imagine the travelling that Professor Du Boulay did in order to gather all the material for his project? It is the knowledge of how to unravel the past and present it that I find so fascinating. As with family historians, the history of one's family is there for you to discover provided you have the correct tools. The author did have the tools for this book and I commend it for your reading. Perhaps not at one stretch but gradually so that you can assimilate the information provided. It not only provides historical information on Bexley but shows the pattern of how our forefathers lived in the various villages of Kent at the time.

Frances Oxley

I originally wrote this at the request of Russell Gray, Editor of Bexley Civic Society's newsletter but decided to include it in our newsletter as so much Bexley Village history is pertinent to our own area.

Editor

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There was a society at Lamorbey
Whose interest was mainly in History
Although it was local
We studied the yokels
And people of merit and mystery

The Society is now moving to Alma
This we hope to achieve without trauma
After 42 years
There may be some tears
But history must look to the future.

Written and read by Chairman, Iris Morris on the Society's very last meeting at Lamorbey Park - 15.5.94.

Editor.

Move to Alma Road

Iamorbey
& Sidcup
LOCAL
HISTORY SOCIETY