

Commemorative Edition

Welcome to this a commemorative edition of the Harbury and Ladbroke News to mark the first 26 years of the magazine. This coincides with the turn of the Millennium and records aspects of life in the two villages over the last quarter of the 20th Century.

In researching the back issues of the magazine, it is clear what a unique historical record of both villages is developing. Whilst there have been many changes over these years, it is surprising how some issues and concerns are the same now as they were in the 1970s.

Over the years Mike Bloxham has been taking photographs for the magazine, many of which have not been able to be used. A selection of these along with some of the originals that did appear in the Harbury and Ladbroke News have been included in this publication.

I would wish to record my thanks to all those who have helped make this publication possible,

- ◆ The Harbury and Ladbroke News Committee members who spent time reading through back copies.
- ◆ Gordon Robbins who scanned the articles and took the current village scene photographs to accompany the older pictures, along with the regular Harbury & Ladbroke News typists for producing the final script.
- ◆ To Martin Shepherd for providing a copy of the photograph of the Fosse Way railway bridge, originally taken by R.J. Blenkinsop, along with Andrew Bell who took an up to date version of the same scene.
- ◆ Mike Bloxham for his continuing supply of photographs.
- ◆ The regular team of distributors who delivered this commemorative issue to your door.
- ◆ Finally, to those who wrote the original articles, some of whom are not here today to continue to enjoy our villages.

John Holden
Chairman - Harbury & Ladbroke News

February 2002



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The grant has been used to pay for printing costs incurred.

We are grateful for the support received from the Awards for All programme.

MAY 1974

Welcome to the first issue of Harbury News, a monthly publication covering all aspects of village life. Harbury News is backed by the Parochial Church Council and is financed by the generous support of the advertisers, (whom we hope you will patronise) and also by individual donations. It is produced by a team comprising: Diana Holt, Marian Millington, Alan Lord and John Moore. Also with the assistance of members of village organisations, who contribute articles and reports on their activities. We aim to circulate to all households in Harbury Parish, free of charge, for the next six months. After that it may be necessary to ask for a small subscription, by which time we hope that you will consider it to be good value and that you will have come to depend on it as a major source of information and entertainment.

Amongst the items appearing will be notes on village activities and societies, the Diary of Events, the Vicar's Letter, articles on village history, sales and wants and a correspondence page - we hope you will write to us on both serious and humorous matters.

We are fortunate to belong to a village which has a strong community spirit and in which a host of activities provide interest and enjoyment to many. It is our hope that Harbury News will help more people to learn about and take part in village life.

MAY 1974**Tennis Courts**

As you may remember, the Tennis Courts were completed and ready for use in November last year. With the approach of summer, now is the time for everyone to begin to make full use of them.

Bookings can be made at J.A. & E. Howard and the charge for the booking is 20p an hour - under 16's free of charge between 4.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. Monday to Friday. We are hoping to set aside one evening a week for an informal get-together, when anyone can turn up and get a game. The committee would also be interested in hearing from any organisation in the village wishing to use the courts.

Please remember that plimsolls must always be worn, otherwise the court surface will be damaged.

MAY 1974

The Village Hall

Many of the older inhabitants of Harbury will of course know the history of our Village Hall, but for some of the newer arrivals it is a fascinating story and the Hall itself is an excellent example of village life as it used to be all over England. It really is the centre of the community and is used by almost every organisation for various functions and regular meetings.

In the true tradition of Harbury, the money to build the Hall was raised by the villagers themselves and it was in 1953 that the need for a new bigger Hall was first realised. At the time of the Coronation a party was held for the children of Harbury and it was obvious then that the old premises were nowhere near adequate. That evening a group got together in a local pub and discussed the possibility of building a new Hall and at the end of that meeting, everyone put 6d. in the middle of the table and the fund for the new building was begun!

Ten years later, in 1963 the new Hall was opened by Mr. John Profumo, but at that time the Village Hall Committee was still £2,000 in debt and this took five years to clear. In fact, when it was first opened, the Hall was very poorly booked and it was not until the influx of new people to the village with their fresh ideas and new societies being formed, that the Hall began to be used regularly. Now there are at least 23 regular bookings from organisations ranging from Guides, Brownies, Badminton, Youth Club, Golden Age, Crusaders and many more, to the occasional wedding reception, dance and 21st birthday party.

Five years ago an extension was planned and the plans were approved but after a much disheartening effort, neither the Warwickshire County Council nor the Department of Education would agree to help with costs. Now a more modest plan is in progress; the money to be raised once more by the people of Harbury themselves. Some money of course is made by the booking charges for the Hall, but another method of raising funds for its upkeep is by the 200 Club. The Hall is very much in demand now and it is wise to book well in advance.

AUGUST 1974

M40 Motorway

About 100 people attended a public meeting organised by the Harbury Society at the Village Hall in Harbury on 20th July to discuss the proposals for the extension of the M40 from Banbury to Warwick. The Society Chairman, David Winter, outlined the 3 possible routes which have been proposed by the Department of the Environment. He emphasised the concern of the Harbury Society about the effects which the Harbury route would have on the environment of the village and in particular the visual damage which would be done to the recently restored Chesterton Windmill.

In the discussion that followed, local landowners, parish councillors and many other villagers expressed strong disapproval of the Harbury route. Many were of the opinion that the need for the motorway extension had not been proven. Some felt that greater use of alternative means of transport would obviate the need for the motorway. It was pointed out that the Warmington route, which would run further from Harbury, was shorter and therefore cheaper than the other alternatives, not only in terms of capital cost but also in terms of maintenance and fuel costs. While concern was expressed over the proximity of the Warmington route to the Burton Dassett Country Park. It was felt that the views here had already been spoiled by the C. A. D. camp at Kineton and that the Harbury route would be far more damaging to the Country Park, in that it would be passing to the north of it through what is now completely unspoiled country.

The following resolution was unanimously passed, and is to be sent to the Department of the Environment.

"While not conceding that the need for a motorway extension has been proven, this meeting nevertheless wishes to register its strong disapproval of the Harbury 'Blue' Route on the following grounds: - it affects more communities than the alternative routes; it is more damaging to the environment and is more costly than the alternative routes. If it is deemed imperative that the motorway extension must be constructed, then this meeting would be in favour of the adoption of the Warmington Red Route".

It is hoped to combine with the villages of Bishop's Itchington, Knightcote and Fenny Compton, and send a further joint resolution in the near future.

OCTOBER 1974



First impressions

As new members of the village of Harbury, my husband and I have been asked by one of the editors of this magazine (mentioning no names) to give our first impressions favourable and critical, of the village. Well, here goes. To begin with, everywhere seems to be very quiet and

peaceful, having lived on a busy road before. The community spirit is strong with plenty of organisations for children and adults to join. People are friendly and helpful. We find that we can buy most things in the village, although I personally miss a baker's selling home-made bread and cakes.

Also, is there a window cleaner around? Someone could build himself a very profitable round. Or perhaps the cleaning of all the dirty windows in Harbury could raise some more money for the School pool or the Village Hall extension? My husband has sampled the beer in all 5 pubs and has decided on one as his local, although the others follow a close second. So all in all it looks as though we have settled, as Harbury is certainly a very pleasant village to live in.

JANUARY 1975

Harbury Haunts

Were you aware of Harbury's ghostly attachments? Perhaps the following will remind you and maybe you know of other spirit friends in the village that would be interesting to hear about.

The Old Mill down Chilydke has a horrifying story of the miller's son who met his death by being mangled in the machinery and is reputed to return to the Mill occasionally. The old infants school behind the church boasts its own spectre. It is said he had to approve of the headmaster or mistress or he made their lives unbearable. I have been told there are holes in one of the doors - the result of his trying to shoot one headmaster whom he disliked. The last headmistress, Mrs. Watts must have passed muster as she lived a quiet life (?) while she taught there.

The other end of the village doesn't want to be left out and the story is told about a young couple returning from their baby's christening, passing the village pond, at that time on the green by The Old New Inn. The husband suddenly pushed his wife in and she drowned. He was hanged for his crime but is supposed to return to the scene of his crime. So, when crossing the green some dark night full of a more pleasant spirit, if you get that spongy feeling under your feet walk a little faster!

We supposedly had a witch in Harbury before the Supermarket was built a row of cottages occupied the site. The first cottage being the home of the witch who used to turn herself into a rabbit of all things and wend

her way down Childyke. One day a dog chased this rabbit and managed to bite its leg. Being a witch she of course escaped, but for days after the old lady was confined to her bed with a badly bitten leg. Funnily enough it isn't long ago that the present occupier was suffering with leg trouble. Again perhaps we could blame spirit trouble?

Jean Clarke

JANUARY 1975

Cutting your motoring costs

At the time of writing the 75p gallon of petrol is, unfortunately, an unpleasant fact of life - making the journey to work even more expensive. We have already established some contacts for those wishing to share travelling regularly to Coventry, Leamington and Warwick. If you are interested, please ring Harbury 600000, when every endeavour will be made to put you in touch with someone of similar travelling habits.

FEBRUARY 1975

Village Club

At last it has happened! The Village Club is on the move! All the tenders for the conversions have been received and, with the full support of our Quantity Surveyor, we have given the contract to a young, progressive local firm. At the time of writing the starting date has been fixed for the first Monday in February so by the time this magazine is published you will be seeing signs of activity. Barring catastrophe the conversion will be completed by the summer holidays, in time for the winter season to begin in a new comfortable atmosphere. The next six months will be a busy and challenging time for all active members, as it is intended to carry on with the normal sporting activities from dominoes to bingo. Of course, this will involve a little inconvenience at times and bingo players may find themselves sitting around the snooker tables occasionally, while the snooker men will be down to one table until the job is completed. All this, however, will be justified by the end result, so roll on summer!

Dick Picken

JUNE 1975

Harbury P. T. A. - Opening of the Trainer Pool

On Saturday 12th April, the Pool was officially opened by Hamilton Bland, the British Olympic Swimming Coach. We were lucky with the weather, and the pool was heated to a temperature of 82 degrees. Mr. Bland commented on the very high standard of the pool and the workmanship - in his opinion the best of its type in the county. Mr. Wright, PTA Chairman, took the opportunity of thanking all the men who have given many, many weekends and evenings to ensure that the Pool was completed as quickly as possible. (It is rumoured that they are at a loss to know what to do at week-ends, now that the project is finished). So far, £2,146 has been raised and £3,750 borrowed (for up to 4 years) towards the Pool. Expenditure to date is £5,579, so a great deal of money must still be found. Our grateful and sincere thanks for all the support received in the past, which we trust will continue in the future.





The High Street



Originally, the bread was baked in a 14ft by 9ft faggot oven, which had to be heated by filling it with burning sticks. Later, it was replaced by a coal-fired oven. Not only was the bread baked and sold in the village, it was also delivered by horse-drawn carriage to farms and villages around Harbury. For a time, loaves were taken to Leamington each day. When the business closed in 1956, a large loaf would have cost you 4d (or less than 2p). We wonder how many of our readers remember the Fox Inn, which was opposite the Old Bakery. We believe it closed in the 1920's. If you have a photograph of Harbury with a story behind it, why not drop a line to the Harbury News.

APRIL 1977

This month Harbury News becomes Harbury and Ladbroke News in recognition of the coming-together of our two parishes. We are indebted to Canon Fishley, Mrs. Flower and Mrs. Edwards for organising the Ladbroke copy and distribution.

We hope the new cover meets with your approval—no prizes for guessing that it is the work of Joe Bamford! Thank you Joe.

The Editors

MAY 1977

A hole lot of trouble

You know me, I worry too much - so they say. I've been losing sleep over the Jubilee Tree, but when the day came I had almost convinced myself that nothing disastrous could happen, after all I had had all the Services traced. I should have known better. My husband complains that I'm never wrong, except perhaps when I think I've made a mistake and then discover I was right after all! Eastcote Nurseries supplied the tree and fortunately along with it, a most even-tempered and philosophical driver.

He started digging just after 9.00 am at the spot I had marked on the Green. At 10.15 am he uncovered an electricity cable - it shouldn't have been THERE - honestly! And, you're not going to believe this, but at 11.00 am at the bottom of the second hole there appeared another cable.

Quite a large crowd had gathered by now, along with Mike Bloxham who had already taken pictures of the two abortive attempts, and they were getting restless.

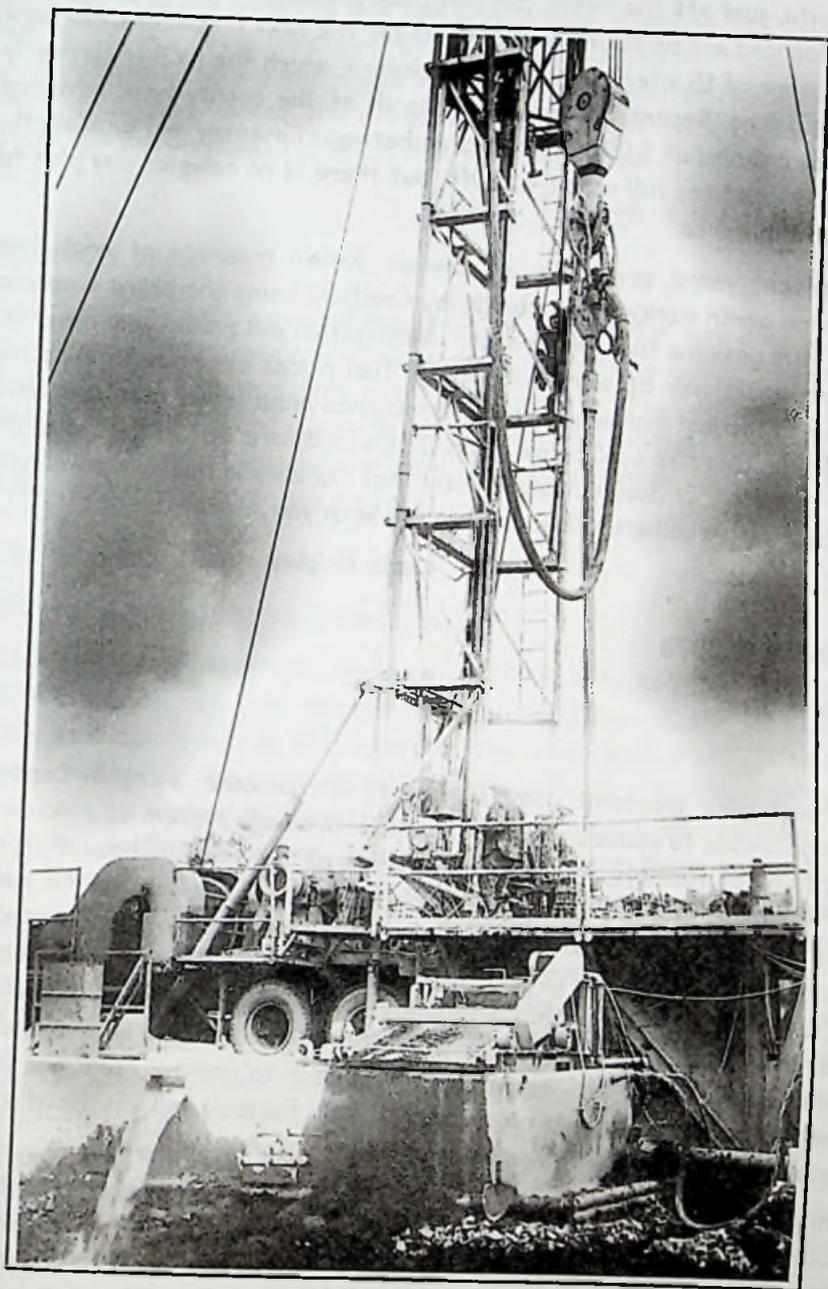
The driver and volunteer diggers filled in hole number 2 and started all over again. With Good Friday being a Sunday there was no compensation to be gained from over the road, except that disappointed drinkers were swelling the crowd. However, when the tree was finally lowered in by crane the effect was spectacular, with the Green resembling a battlefield and a large crowd including a mounted detachment watching. A Union Flag was produced - well it is the JUBILEE TREE - and Mike Bloxham took photos for posterity and the Courier. The driver went home thankfully and the drinkers, similarly thankful that 12 noon had arrived, retired to the Old New Inn.



So the tree's planted - it's yours now, thank goodness. My job's over and surely no one but Linda Ridgley could so unerringly position a tree over a cable - twice, especially when there's only one cable or supposed to be! Please look after this Plane. I really don't think I could bear the strain of watching any more holes being dug.

Linda Ridgley

'Boring' News



In September the NCB, as part of its policy of exploration and expansion, applied for permission to take sample borings in the parish of Harbury. The site, just off the Fosse, has now been prepared, the drilling rig is in position, and will be taking core samples for the next five weeks. Harbury is only one of 15 sites in South Warwickshire, which the NCB is currently investigating. Recent borings in the north of the county have revealed new coal seams at 3,000ft in the area between Coventry and Kenilworth, and borings here will reach 4,000ft, but there is no news of any plan to mine in this area.

In recent years, previously uneconomic, known reserves of coal have become worth working, the new Selby Coalfield being the prime example, and it is possible that the present investigation will reveal coal reserves which would only be worth working if fuel prices continue to escalate. Again in the last few years, totally unimagined reserves of coal have come to light. There is coal below much of Oxfordshire but as yet it is not worth mining. It does not seem likely that Harbury is in imminent danger of becoming a colliery village, but we will keep you informed.

Linda Ridgley

FEBRUARY 1978

Dear Editors,

Drains

Through your magazine, may I request as 'someone' living in Deppers Bridge please to cease using the communal drainage system as a means of disposing of rubbish. The main sewer runs at the rear of houses on the north side of the road and the branch from those dwellings on the south side connects in a manhole in my garden. Yesterday, by chance I discovered one of my gulleys was about to discharge someone else's effluent over my footpath. Fortunately, the blockage was within reach of the drain rods kindly loaned by a helpful neighbour, and at the end of some 2 hours revolting activities, I was able to remove from the main sewer a bundle of odious rags larger than a football and the flooding of my and adjoining property was averted.

This was by no means an isolated incident as a number of blockages have occurred over the years when on numerous occasions the local Sanitary organisation has had to be called upon to rod the sewer. The manhole in

my garden is shallow and therefore gives first indication of the pending crisis. Salvation at one time came speedily from the Maintenance personnel based in Southam, but now crucial time is lost as this succour has to journey from Stratford (no wonder the rates increase!). As I never wish again to see the inside of an inspection chamber may I appeal for the collaboration of the residents in the use of WCs, gulleys and drains for the purposes for which they were designed?

Cyril M. Townend, A.R.I.B.A.

FEBRUARY 1978

We are sad to have to record the death of Tom Holder, who died after being knocked down by a car a few yards from his home in Mill Street on 13th January. Tom was very actively involved in the Senior Citizens Benefit Association, and a very popular figure both in the village and at Automotive Products where he worked. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Holder and their son Malcolm.

AUGUST 1978

Ladbroke (C of E) Junior & Infant School

Some 30 parents attended a meeting on 5th July to hear Mr. Collinson, the Area Education Officer outline the intentions of the education authorities consequent on the closure of the school in July 1979. He gave a brief resume on the re-organisation of the schools within the Southam area from September 1979 and how those children at Ladbroke would be integrated in this structure. Southam Schools were being re-modelled into a First School, Middle School, and Senior School from the present Infants, Junior and Senior Schools. Interchange between the schools would be at the ages of 8-plus and 12-plus instead of the current age of 7-plus and 11-plus. St. James' School for children up to 7-plus and those of 8-plus would be accommodated at the present Southam Middle School.

A special concession was being made for those of 11-plus who would go straight to the Senior School, rather than be submitted to an additional change from the Middle School at 12-plus. Parents would have the option of sending their children to other schools than those mentioned above but application would have to be made to the appropriate Headteachers to ascertain whether there were any spare places. The Education authority would neither guarantee places at these schools nor assist in

the provision of transport. However, for those children at Ladbroke at the time of closure, transport would be provided from Ladbroke to the new Southam St. James' and Middle Schools. Children going on to the Senior School direct would not be guaranteed transport assistance outside those currently applicable. Arrangements for children in the outlying areas such as Deppers Bridge and Bishops Itchington will depend on routing of transport at the time.



NOVEMBER 1978

To the residents of Harbury

With respect to the members of the Parish Council, I and a large proportion of the so called 'Terrorist Gangs' of Harbury would like to put a few points which would, in our opinion and we hope in yours, be beneficial to the growing unrest about our exaggerated feats of vandalism. Mr. Bingham's suggestion of providing more facilities for the youth of Harbury will be welcomed. Barbara Bayliss has been working as the Youth Leader of Southam for a while now and I believe, with my friends, she is doing a worthwhile job. Since the re-opening of the Youth Club some three weeks ago, I have seen almost 11 of the younger generation in attendance and not as stated in the 'Leamington Spa Courier' dated Friday, 13th October 1978, quote "The Youth Club,

however was finding it difficult to compete with the counter attractions of the Village Club which now ran a disco on Wednesdays". It must also be remembered the disco at the Club is banned to children of less than 16 years of age unless accompanied by an adult. Therefore, it is possible to say if Barbara Bayliss in conjunction with the organisers of the Harbury Youth Club could run a disco on a Wednesday and then run the Youth Club on a different night this would provide a much needed facility for the Harbury Youth. A Saturday or Friday night disco, such as the ones run in Southam at the Youth Club and Community Centre, would be very welcome.

DECEMBER 1978

Facilities for young people in Harbury

Almost 100 people - at least a quarter of them teenagers - packed into the Wight School for a lively and productive meeting, called by the P.C.C. A permanent meeting place and regular discos soon emerged as the main things the youngsters want. Both the Village Hall and the Wight School are already booked too much to all regular use by the teenagers, and the discos held in Harbury at present are either mid-week (difficult because of homework) or open to children from about the age of 9 (which means the older ones won't go to them). Ways and means of providing a separate building possibly a large Portakabin, were discussed. Alan Perry, the Area Youth Officer said this was the solution used in Bidford on Avon to the problem of a meeting place. He said various grants and subsidies would be available for such a scheme.

The rooms shortly to be vacated by the Rugby Club in the Village Hall could possibly be utilised, and Midge Keen agreed to put to the Village Hall Committee the possibility of cheaper rates for the youngsters' use of the Hall. The young people said they would be prepared to organise discos themselves, and would need little or no supervision, but David Beardshaw, Diocesan Youth Adviser warned them that all sorts of problems can arise and that adults (ancient as they may appear) are often quite handy to have around. He also recommended exploring every avenue with regard to existing buildings, before embarking on the ambitious idea of providing and equipping a new building. The discussion continued for almost two hours, and finally a steering committee of adults and teenagers was set up to investigate the question in greater detail.

It is hoped that coffee evenings and discos will begin very soon, at least for a trial period, and that a further open meeting will be held in due course to report on the steering committee's progress.

DECEMBER 1978

Wroth Silver 1978

We have saved the village. Did you know that the parish must pay 11½ pence a year or "forfeit a white bull with red ears and nose"? We did not know about the bull, or the amount of our village tribute when we set out for Knightlow Cross. We had read that on Martinmas, November 11th, each year a tribute is paid by certain parishes in Warwickshire to the Duke of Buccleugh. It is England's oldest road tax and originated as a payment of right of way for cattle across the Manor grounds. The ceremony takes place at sunrise at Knightlow Cross in Knightlow Hill and this year is the 728th occasion. Representatives of each parish attend and drop their money into a hollow in a large stone, the former base of Knightlow Cross. Those wishing to witness the ceremony can park at the Dun Cow, Stretton on Dunsmore at 6.30 am. It was a very dark and misty morning when we left the village (Tim had set the alarm for 5.30 am!!)

There was a large crowd in the Dun Cow and we looked everywhere for our Parish Representative. Rum and hot milk was served - it looked like milky coffee but we didn't try one - before the short walk along the A45 to the field with the hollow stone. The Duke of Buccleugh's representative stepped forward not in doublet and hose but an anorak) announced that tribute was due and the forfeit of the bull for non payment. Consternation - were we really the only Harburians there? If so we would pay - how much? The names of the Parishes, about a dozen in all and widely scattered throughout the county, were read out from a leather covered ledger; Arley - one halfpenny, Lillington - one halfpenny, Radford Semele - one penny. Each time a figure stepped forward and dropped his tribute money into the stone. Tim passed me 50p - "Ask for change". "Don't be silly, this is all I've got" and passed over 4p. "Harbury - eleven and one halfpence". There was a gasp from the crowd and me - at the large sum. Pause - I stepped up, dropped in the coins, hoping that the Duke's Representative could not count at that range in the mist. We did not stay for the ceremonial breakfast at the Dun Cow and arrived home long before the milk.

An anachronistic feudal survival - "Tribute" paid in decimal coins in modern dress, literally a hedgerow from the roaring traffic.

Tim & Marian Millington

JUNE 1979

Dear Editors

I would like to suggest a way of overcoming the problem of dogs fouling the footpaths etc. They always go to the same place, but if you put some pepper down this will discourage them. I put some pepper down under my window and the dogs never came there again.

A.C. Over

JULY 1979

A typist's lament

(or The Joys of Producing the Harbury & Ladbroke News)

Oh no! I don't believe it, it's typing day again.

It's washday too, but that's no use, it's pouring down with rain.

So, on with the blinkers, get to work

No time for coffee, no time to shirk!

I heard those editors late last night

Adding on pages with great delight

"Thirty two! - Hey, that's a bit much"

(I might be complaining in Double Dutch!)

"Let's buy a typewriter", Oh what fun!

I didn't realise just what we'd done.

Poor old typewriter bought for a song,

Five years later, still going strong.

Cont'd

*I typed all day and into the night
Please, please make everything fit in just right!
They've worked it out on the calculator
so of course it will fit (sooner or later).*

*Add a bit here, chop a, bit there,
Carry on typing - don't despair.
There'll be room for that photo, I suppose
I'm sure he won't mind if I cut off his nose!*

*Now it's gone to the printers - sigh with relief,
"Stapling's on Friday", says the chief.
It's surprising how many friends you can lose
Saying "Come round on Friday, we're stapling the News!"
Saturday morning it's distribution
(So many folks make their contribution).
"Get these delivered as fast as you can".
That's the plea from the editor-man.*

*Then it's Sunday and all is done.
Let's say once more, "Oh isn't it fun?"
Just wait for that 'phone call - it can't be long
"Do you REALISE you've spelt my name wrong?" !!!*

NOVEMBER 1979

Harbury Society M40 Walk

With other members of the Harbury Society I walked along part of one of the proposed routes for the M40. It was a section of the 'Warmington' Route from the Windmill Road to the Gated Road at

Chesterton and it illustrated well the conflict of interests caused by Motorway construction. On one hand there is the motorist who wants to get from A to B quickly on the other the householder who doesn't want his property devalued and often between the two is the farmer who loses his land.

There are three possible routes for the M40, but only two in the Harbury area (two routes are amalgamated here). The Harbury Route comes closest to the village and passes within a few yards of Chesterton Windmill. For various reasons it does not appear to be the preferred route, but if it were both the Windmill and the village would suffer. The 'Warmington' Route passes to the south of Chesterton village, cuts off the corner of Chesterton Wood and consumes a large acreage of good agricultural land. Some farmers will have their holdings split in two, others will merely lose land which they will find hard to replace. Footpaths will be diverted and wildlife will be disturbed, in itself this is bad enough but many people are worried by the uncertainty of it all.

NOVEMBER 1979

A computer in your home!

Hire a computer for an evening, morning or afternoon and learn about computers by using one in your home! The Commodore PET is a portable micro-computer with built-in video screen & keyboard. Easy to use, it has its own cassette recorder and a selection of tapes containing games and other programs; anyone over 5 can use it!

Try the games, then you can learn to program for yourself. If you can use a calculator you'll soon learn BASIC, the standard micro-computer language. Your children may already know it!

The hiring rates are:

	Weekday Session (morning, afternoon or evening)	Whole Weekday	Saturday or Sunday
Introductory	£1.00	£3.00	£4.00
Normal	£1.50	£4.00	£5.00

The introductory rates apply for the first two bookings per household.

*There's only one PET available, so book early to avoid disappointment.

Ring Mike or Pauline Meditsky

DECEMBER 1979

Village Hall Committee

The Village Hall is not a healthy place at least not if you are a piano! Children scratch your veneer, strong men push you about and those with a musical bent hammer you to death. Gill Gurden says that the Village Hall has had at least six pianos, but the last one only survived a year or so. Its demise came at an unfortunate time because Mr. Andrews had hired the Hall to the Warwickshire Hunt for its revue and they needed the use of a good piano. At considerable expense (£25) the Village Hall Committee bought another only to find that Sir Adrian Beecham (of the Warwickshire Hunt) did not consider its tone good enough. He is bringing his own instrument now. As Mrs. Gurden says, "the Village Hall cannot go on buying pianos only to have them ruined." From now on the inadequacies of the resident piano will have to be accepted or it can be re-tuned at the hirer's expense.

MARCH 1980

Proposed Harbury Tennis Club



There has been considerable interest in the idea of forming a tennis club in the village. The club would provide the opportunity for regular play at reasonable cost for players of all standards and as a by-product would guarantee income to the Parish Council to help with the maintenance of the courts. The details have yet to be finalised, but the Parish Council have agreed that if a club were formed, it could have exclusive use of the courts on two evenings a week, plus two weekend sessions. As the next step, an informal meeting of all those interested in joining a club has been arranged for 12th March at 8p.m. in the Crown. If you're a tennis player (of whatever standard, including beginners) please come along - at the very least it's a good excuse for a pint. If you would like further information please contact Sid Newman, or D. Parkin.

APRIL 1980

Profile - Fred Sprawson

Fred Sprawson is the last of a long line of Sprawsons who have lived in Harbury for centuries. Indeed, Fred himself has lived here for the best part of a century! Born in 1902, in a little cottage (now demolished) in South Parade, he served in the Royal Artillery during the First World War and in the Home Guard in the Second. He married Hannah Hoxford of Temple End in 1920, when their first home was a small rented cottage at Childyke. He well remembers the severe winters of the 1930's when those cottages were snow-bound for days and he tells the tale of being wished "Good Evening" by what he swears was the Miller's ghost, as he walked down Mill Lane late one night on his way home as he admits, from the old Fox Inn.

Fred and Hannah had three sons, Harry, Joe and William, and a single daughter, Mary. Harry was killed in the Normandy landings and Bill was unfortunately knocked down by a tram near a Warwick pub in 1947. Mary married Sydney Alcock, Schoolmaster at Ladbroke and they later moved to Banbury. Joe Sprawson followed his father into employment in the Cement Works where eventually Joe was promoted to Deputy Works Manager in 1951. When the Works closed he was transferred to a southern quarry, but Fred remained in Harbury having retired in 1967. Fred's greatest thrill was to have been photographed as one of the team that uncovered the ichthyosaur in the quarries in 1928; for a month or so, he says, they were all celebrities.

Both Fred and Hannah were active in village affairs, Fred being prime mover in the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, Harbury Branch and Hannah a pillar and one time President of the Women's Institute. In his youth Fred took part in Pennyfarthing races round the village and won the leg of lamb from the greasy pole two years running at the Village Fete. He was and still is an enthusiastic gardener, at one time cultivating both his cottage garden and two allotments. Now he has given up all but a half plot, but still manages to grow more than enough vegetables for himself.

The family were re-housed in the late thirties into a council house in Pineham Avenue, where they spent many happy years, but on Hannah's death in 1971, Fred was moved into an old people's dwelling. Now that he is almost 78, Fred says that he doesn't get about as much as he used to, but he is out almost every day on his bicycle, he still cultivates his allotment and he plays a fair game of Crib at the Village Club. Fred has seen many changes in Harbury in his time, some, he admits for the better, but he thinks it has altered so much that he feels he does not recognise the village and the villagers do not recognise him. Despite this, his tall stories are well known in the Old New Inn, where he goes for the occasional pint, and, as he has threatened to enter this year's Bicycle Race (where he will undoubtedly be the oldest contestant) soon no one will dare to deny his energetic existence.

Avril Premier

NOVEMBER 1980

Dear Editors

I felt I must write to say how disappointing it was to see so few Harbury people at the excellent Cabaret & Dance organised recently to help the funds of the Village Hall. We all rely on the Hall to be there for our various events, we expect it to be clean and well maintained and we are only too ready to complain if we think the charges are too high. But we are it seems, much less ready to support its fund-raising efforts. This was a very good value evening, with a popular group and professional entertainment of a high standard, but there were so few village people there, I wondered if I'd gone to the wrong place by mistake!! I feel we should consider very carefully how lost we would be without our Village Hall, and we should all pull our weight to help the small committee which has to bear the burden of maintaining this facility.

Yours sincerely,

Lin Hayes



Binswood End



MARCH 1981

Mr. Tom Hauley

You may have read in the 'Courier' that Mr. Tom Hauley has decided to relinquish the job of winding the Church clock - a task he has performed daily for the last 41 years. The Harbury and Ladbroke News would like to add its congratulations to the many already expressed to Mr. Hauley on this wonderful record and our gratitude for the amenity of the clock which is always reliably on time. The clock is about 200 years old, and we understand it cost 18 shillings (80p) when new!

MAY 1981

Love or money?

"Professional magazine editors do it for money - amateurs do it for love". A quote from the adjudicator, Mr. John Algar, speaking at the Magazine Competition prize giving ceremony. That set us thinking - for love of what? Do we really love chasing round prompting people into writing bits for us? Are we really ecstatic about counting the words, altering here and there, making it all fit? Surely we don't really enjoy being chained to the typewriter for several hours, banging in 950 staples or trapping our fingers in 950 letter boxes? So where does the love come in? Now, if we said it's because we love YOU, you'd say 'What a load of rubbish' and turn to the next page. And yet YOU - the community of Harbury - the people who make up this marvellous village of ours - are very important to us.

The feeling of belonging to the family of Harbury is something we, along with many others, treasure. And just as it's important for members of a family to discuss things together, so we believe it's important for members of a community to communicate - to share thoughts, ideas and experiences. With this exchange of information comes more understanding of each other's points of view, pleasure in each other's joys and compassion for each other's problems. Isn't that the sort of society we all want: understanding, joyful, compassionate - Christian? Yes, now we see that's where the love comes in.

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Thou art hereby advised by order of my lord
the chairman of Harbury Theatre
Group that a grand Mediaeval
Banquet will be occasioned at the venue of
Harbury Village Hall at the hour of 8 of the clock
on 22nd November 1997.

Tradition demands that huge quantities of the
finest victuals, scoured from all over the
county and beyond, be served for your delight.
Similarly for thy edification, bands of
strolling players and minstrels have pledged their
attendance at the feast.

As thou mightest expect, such fare and
entertainment doth have a price. Therefore in
order to keep the peasants in their rightful
circumstances, seats at the feast costeth £15 per
capitum (intoxicating refreshment included), and will be
reserve'ed on 613214 or 612009 from
11th October 1997.

Be thou further advised that accommodation at
the great hall is limited, and thy purpose to
patronise the event should be decided swiftly.
Thy finest contemporary robes are NOT essential but
will surely add to the spectacle of the occasion.

SEPTEMBER 1981

Bless the Prince of Wales & Princess



That must have been said thousands of times on Wednesday 29th July, but nowhere more sincerely than in Harbury. We'd seen the splendour of Royal Weddings before but none had touched the hearts of common people more than this one. And so to add our own seal of approval, Mill Street organised its own Street Party for the children (or was it?). Thirty-eight children and as many adults arrived at 4.00 p.m. in the School Car Park (by kind permission of Mr. Oliver) to eat, drink and play games. A pianola had been brought from Rosemary Ottewell's during the morning to add music to the festivities.

The children consumed so much food and squash that it was thought they wouldn't play games, but under the superb guidance of Bob Taylor, they (and many adults) spent a full hour exercising their vocal chords and racing round in ever decreasing circles; so much so that no one wanted to leave, but around 6.30pm each child received a gift and the little ones a balloon and all went home to watch action replay no 3, having thoroughly

celebrated the Royal Wedding. Our thanks to all those who helped to make the day so memorable and for the kind donations.

JUNE 1982



Carnival Week is upon us! A whole host of activities, culminating in the Carnival and Fete, and Grand Carnival Dance on Saturday 12th June, are planned by our Carnival Committee. Harbury Carnival Week and the Big

Day itself are always highly enjoyable, and all are commended to join in the fun. Full details are in the official programme on sale now. A recent article in the Leamington Courier suggested that newcomers to our village are apathetic and patronising and are attempting to turn Harbury into a town. The Editorial Committee of this magazine does not share this view. Whilst it is true that several committees are desperately short of members, a village which supports over 50 different organised activities can hardly be called apathetic. We would be interested in readers' views on this matter.

JULY 1982 - 100th Edition

It is with some sense of achievement, or at least of persistence that the Committee and Editors mark this month the 100th issue of your magazine.



The idea of a village magazine stemmed from the Diary, edited by Peter Phillips and from the concern of the P.C.C. that the Church's parish magazine had a poor circulation and could not contain much specific Harbury news. As with many village endeavours, Valentine Du Buisson gathered a group of people together who were interested in making some sort of contribution and - before they realised what had happened - they were the committee and Valentine had disappeared!!

JANUARY 1983

Did you know?

This month's spotlight on our advertisers concentrates on Southam Carpets, Goodwin's Funeral Service, Midland Carpet Cleaning Service and Whicham Old Rectory Holidays:

SOUTHAM CARPETS was established 4 years ago with a shop at 9 Coventry Street, Southam owned and run by Jim Steele. It offers an extensive range of all types of floor coverings - carpets, vinyls and rugs, with selection available in your home with free estimates. Jim Steele has been in the carpet trade for 27 years, serving his apprenticeship with Woodwards in Leamington Spa.

W. GOODWIN & SON - FUNERAL DIRECTORS started in the 1890's as Wheelwright and Undertaker and with wheelwrighting dying out it then became Funeral Directors, Hardware and DIY retailers in Coventry Street, Southam. Run today by brothers Cyril and John Goodwin, they pride themselves on their personal service and still serve families that their grandfather James Goodwin did when he founded the business. Their uncle, Arthur Goodwin, had an undertaker's business in Chapel Street, Harbury. Originally, coffins were delivered to the home of the deceased at dusk on a hand-cart and the cortege proceeded on foot to the church. It was very unusual for a funeral director to attend a funeral outside his own village.

FEBRUARY 1983

Goodbye and hello again

It is not often that we see dramatic results as a result of fearless press campaigning, although Watergate was impressive. Our column of thanks and resolutions for 1983 had one startling outcome. The chap who always dumps plastic bags in the ditches along Bush Heath Road, must be an avid reader of the Harbury & Ladbroke News. The day after the publication of the resolution in the January edition, the plastic bags were joined by a large bunch of holly and a fine Christmas Tree. The power of a free and unfettered press is a major force for democracy, but when it comes to dumping rubbish, well.

Ian Jackson

FEBRUARY 1983**Meeting on the Village Hall roof repairs**

The flat roof to the Farley Room leaks and on Wednesday 5 January over 100 interested Parishioners crammed into that room to discuss ways and means of effecting repairs. The Parish Council and Village Hall Committee had come to the conclusion that a Supplementary Rate would have to be levied to cover the costs and Iory Davies, Chairman of the Parish Council explained that either another flat roof could be laid or a pitched roof could be constructed. Parish Council Finance Chairman Keith Thompson, said that the flat roof had defeated all attempts at repair and that the Hall Management Committee whose income derived from the letting of the Hall had looked to the Parish Council for financial assistance in solving the problem.

He outlined the two repair plans, saying that a new flat roof would always pose problems due to 'water ingress', but that it could at least be funded by the Parish Council and Village Hall jointly, or by the levy of only a 1p rate. A new pitched roof running from the apex of the original Hall building to the outer wall of the extension would cost around £7000 and would need the levy of a 2p rate for one year with extra funds from the Parish Council and Village Hall or a 1p rate could be levied for 3 years and a loan raised. Ken Clarke, the Treasurer for the Village Hall Committee, advocated the building of a pitched roof the most permanent solution.

The Village Hall had raised and spent much money in the past 10 years to build and repair the Hall, whilst keeping the rentals as low as possible as a service to the Village. It did not want the constant worry of paying for repairs. Ken Clarke vigorously defended himself against Mr. Ayres Hunt's accusations that he had not allowed enough funds for the depreciation of the Hall. He pointed out the building had APPRECIATED fivefold or more since its construction. Mr. Hunt was confused over the amount to be raised by a 2p rate and claimed that the Village Hall was not a viable concern. Are we, he asked 'putting a roof on a White Elephant'? He complained that the Council had acted precipitously in calling a Public Meeting before acquiring Planning Permission for changes to the roof of the Hall, but Keith Thompson was able to assure him that the Parish Council had not wished to commit the Parish to the expense involved until it had determined what the public wanted.

Mr. Bristow was concerned that even a pitched roof might be subject to vandalism and Mrs. Sperling asked whether the belsen construction; the barbed wire entanglements on the roof, had succeeded in its purpose. Keith Thompson explained that it was difficult to put into perspective the damage that vandals had done to the roof. Mr. King vehemently opposed any addition to HIS rates and he did not stay to vote on the issues. Keith Thompson, putting the costs in perspective, explained that for the average ratepayer with a three bedroom semi-detached house of £400 rateable value, a 1p rate would cost £4 and a 2p rate £8.

JULY 1983

Ladbroke Parish Council

The June meeting opened with an interesting reply from the EMEB about the frequent electricity cuts and fluctuation in voltage in the village. The Board was able to explain the reasons for the 4 major cuts, which have occurred since last August, but they do intend to investigate individual complaints about low voltage. So if your oven can't get up to temperature or your lights flicker and go dim etc., please let the Parish Clerk know so that she can pass the information to EMEB.

BYPASS There is no need for me to give you details of the work of the Ladbroke Bypass Action Committee, as the Newsletters which are being delivered to every house are keeping everyone well informed. Don't hesitate to get in touch with one of the committee if you feel you have anything to contribute. We believe that Ladbroke NEEDS AND WANTS A BYPASS!!!

MAY 1984

Harbury - how high?

Does ODN mean anything to you? To the Ordnance Survey Services it stands for Ordnance Datum Newlyn which is the mean level of the sea at Newlyn in Cornwall and is used by them for establishing differences in heights on their ordnance survey maps of Great Britain. The Survey Services identify the heights by means of benchmarks emplaced at varying densities in the country, and the commonest form of benchmark consists of a horizontal bar cut into vertical stonework with a broad arrow below the centre of the horizontal bar.

A benchmark was cut into the stonework of 30 Binswood End, Harbury, in 1967, and at that point the height above the mean at Newlyn is 394.54 feet. This is still a valid mark and may be used by Ordnance surveyors for levelling purposes.

AUGUST 1984

A new Folk Club in Harbury

Judging by the interest shown in various recent folk music events, Harbury could easily support a regular folk club of its own. So, to meet this demand I am starting the Harbury Folk Club, meeting on the first Thursday of each month, in the lounge bar of the Old New Inn by kind permission of Mary & John McLaughlin.

The format will be similar to that established by Peter Bones at the club in Bishops Itchington (from which he has now resigned). In other words, admission is free and the atmosphere very informal. Anyone can have a go at singing or playing, not necessarily in a strictly folk idiom, and everyone is encouraged, though not obliged, to join in the choruses.

The opening night is on Thursday 6th September, at 8.30pm, so why not mark it on your calendar now? Look forward to seeing the old faces, and some new ones, at our new venue.

Peter McDonald

OCTOBER 1985

Ladbroke Village News

Just in case anyone hasn't noticed - isn't it lovely to say goodbye to all that traffic. Juggernaut lorries, car transporters, coaches, not to mention the cars, were all re-routed on to the new road at lunchtime on Saturday 21st September. A truly historic moment for all of us who live on the old A423! When I woke up the following morning it felt as if we had had a heavy fall of snow and I haven't quite got used to it yet. My daughter has suggested that we write to the Postman and ask to be re-named 'Banbury Lane' rather than Banbury Road and I think that it's quite a good idea. I'm sure everyone will support the Celebration Dance on Saturday 19th October, by which time the contractors will have more or less finished the clearing up process.



OCTOBER 1985

The restoration of the Mill

It will not have gone unnoticed that Harbury Mill is having building work done on its roof ready for the winter weather. The style of the roof will be similar to before but will be replaced by wooden shingles instead of the old corrugated sheets. The work will take about another three weeks. Originally the upper parts of the Mill were of wood but were replaced in the early nineteenth Century by the present brickwork. The Mill was powerful, capable of grinding ten bushels a day. The sails were of the 'common type' i.e. wooden framework over which canvas cloths were spread. Harbury Mill was wind-driven up until the First World War, when one of the sweeps broke in a gale and, rather than replace the rotting timber, a diesel engine was installed.

The Mill ceased to function just before the Second World War. The ground floor is now used as a light engineering works and most of the Mill machinery is no longer there. The workmen's discoveries have not yet included the ghosts of the two millers who met violent deaths in the Mill and who are reputed to haunt the building. One was entangled in the machinery at the beginning of the century and the other was killed a hundred years previously when he was beaten to death by the sails as he tried to turn them into the wind from the old gallery which no longer exists.

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AUGUST 1986**Memories - Bonnicksen's Aerodrome**

Mrs. Huntley of Bush Heath Lane is pictured holding her photograph of a group of people, herself, included, beneath a Whitley bomber, taken in 1942-43 at Bonnicksen Aerodrome, Harbury Lane - now used by BRS Midlands where tractors are stored.

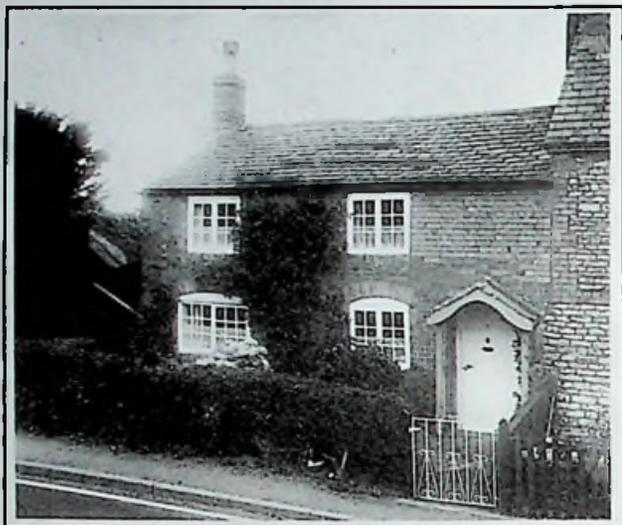
When the photograph was taken, Mrs. Huntley's maiden name was Biddle and she remembers working there as a young girl in the canteen along with Mrs. Enid Bayliss of Dovehouse Lane. About 250 people worked there, employed by S & S cars, forerunner of Jaguar.

The Whitley bombers came in parts, supplied by W.G. Armstrong Whitworth, Coventry. Larry Sheasby also worked there, prior to service with the RAF in 1946. He recalls that between six and seven Whitley bombers were built each month and a Mr. Bill Brown used to come from Rolls Royce to test the Merlin engines.

AUGUST 1987**Samuel Thomas Hauley**

It is with sadness that we record the death on July 22nd of Tom Hauley. A familiar figure about the village riding or pushing his bicycle - sometimes propelling it scooter style - usually wearing a tweed cap or a

trilby hat. He was a faithful servant of Harbury Church, 50 years a chorister, a churchwarden, a school governor, a bell ringer, he looked after the church clock (every day), raised and lowered the flag on the tower and kept the churchyard mown and tidy.



Tom lived at picturesque West End Cottage with its Yew tree, well and orchard. He and his parents moved to Harbury in 1932 and were poultry farmers which Tom continued until some years after the death of his father. A keen gardener, he enjoyed looking after his plot of land right up to the time of his illness. Although he was a shy man, Tom was much loved by his neighbours and friends, and our sympathy is extended to them. We shall miss him.

FEBRUARY 1988

Harbury Assets

During alterations to the Chemist's shop in the High Street, discovered behind a bricked up wall was a unique cast iron black leaded kitchen range intact, complete with its hot water system dated about twenties period, being part of the original cottage where the Governor of the Co-Op lived, until a new house was built next door in 1936. The late Mr. John Honiwell came to live there with his wife and called the house 'Duston' (Honiwell Close was named after him). He served the Co-Op, village and Harbury Church well.

MAY 1988

Treasure Trove



Jean Padbury, member of the Co-Op staff, balances a pre-war original C.W.S. match box on her hand. This was discovered, built into a wall, by one of Dick Whatcott's men whilst carrying out building work at the shop. The advertisement on the side of the box reads: DRINK MALTED MILK WITH EGGS, THE BEST FOOD BEVERAGE.

Harbury Co-Op has a long history and at one time had its own bakehouse, delivery vans plus a coal service. When Harbury was digging for Victory the manager, Mr. John Honiwell (like the character from T.V. Dad's Army) ran the local Home Guard. His wife, among other things, was Courier correspondent when the legendary R.T. Knight was Editor of the Courier which then cost two pence or three pence old money.

JANUARY 1989

Ladbroke

*It is three short years, though it seems like less,
That we came to Ladbroke's heart,
From the barren wastes of Southam, we were keen to make a start.
First we looked at Westies Croft, and that was very nice,
But it cost too much, we was too poor, and they wouldn't drop the price.
So we came to live at Ladbroke Farm, it was dismal, dark & dreary
But soon the locals brightened it with their rousing Ladbroke cheer.*

*We met those locals one by one, liking what we saw,
We supped in cottages & pub, and liked it even more.
There's Pete who eats & drinks & sleeps, & Alec who organises,
There's Rose with her flowers & Rhys his songs,
and Don's little enterprises.*

*Now Ladbroke has a Neighbourhood Watch, but if burglars didn't
know that, Francis will come & usher them out in a nicely tied cravat.
There's a one eyed giant, his name is Ken, he's like the B.F.G.
But after fifteen Bacardis on a Saturday night, the "F" don't
always stand for friendly.*

*The girl next door, her name is Kate, my neighbour I'd hate to lose,
I get to hear all the goings on, that's censored for the
HARBURY & LADBROKE NEWS.*

*Our pub's the Bell, our landlord's Ron, & his lovely wife is Kim,
She works like hell, while he looks on, Golf is the game for him.
He practises a lot I hear, and they say he's come quite far,*

Last week he went around the course in only ninety over par.

But his steaks are big, & the grub is cheap, we love the clientele,

Though they're queuing ten deep at the bar, he serves us locals well.

*Well I could go on about the Domesday Book, Ancient church--- historic
Village Hall.*

But it's people that make Ladbroke great,

So MERRY CHRISTMAS one and all.

by Penny Jenkin

APRIL 1989

Harbury Telephone Exchange

Have you ever wondered how Harbury has managed to maintain its identity as a telephone exchange when so many villages have been swallowed up in the anonymity of town and city exchanges? Knowing that Harbury was one of the earliest automatic exchanges in the country I decided to do some research - here is a brief report:

At noon on Saturday 26th February 1929 the Harbury Automatic Exchange was opened serving 13 subscribers. It was one of several types of 'village' automatic exchanges built to gain experience as to the feasibility of employing automatic plant in areas where only a limited amount of attention could be given, i.e. to overcome the difficulty of obtaining caretaker operation and the growing demand for continuous service through the night and weekends as well as weekdays.

The occasion was reported in the Leamington Spa Courier on 1st March 1929 under the heading **AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE EXCHANGE - AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT** and read 'An important step forward in the provision of telephone facilities has been made at Harbury this week. Subscribers at Harbury desiring to converse with each other call by means of a numbered dial on their new telephones the number required and the connection is made automatically. For calls outside Harbury subscribers dial 01 which has the effect of gaining the attention of the telephonist at the 'parent exchange' Leamington Spa, where the desired connection is made and every assistance given. Calls incoming for Harbury subscribers are dialled from Leamington Spa exchanges. It is hoped shortly to provide public call office facilities at the new Harbury

exchange by means of a kiosk fitted with the latest form of multi-coin box. Harbury is almost the pioneer in the matter of a rural exchange, the only other place thus far provided with one is on the South Coast.

By March 1963 there were 63 subscribers who were able to dial the speaking clock and contact the emergency services by dialling 999 STD and the international SD was introduced in 1977 and by 1983 Harbury served over 1500 subscribers. No doubt there are a lot more now.

Barbara Andrews

JUNE 1989

Harbury School's Trip to France - Parlez-vous Francais?

From May 4th to May 8th class 8 and some of class 7 went to Dinard in France. We set off for Portsmouth in the early hours of the morning. We boarded the ferry at 9.00am, the crossing was calm and the weather was perfect. We were staying in apartments at a place called Manoir De La Vicomte. Everyone was extremely pleased with their rooms.

On Friday morning we went to Mont St Michel. It was very touristy and most of the souvenirs were expensive. But it was very interesting. In the afternoon we went to Corcale oyster beds. Some people tried the oysters, they didn't taste of anything except sea water. We also went to Dinard beach, it was so hot that we went swimming in our underwear.

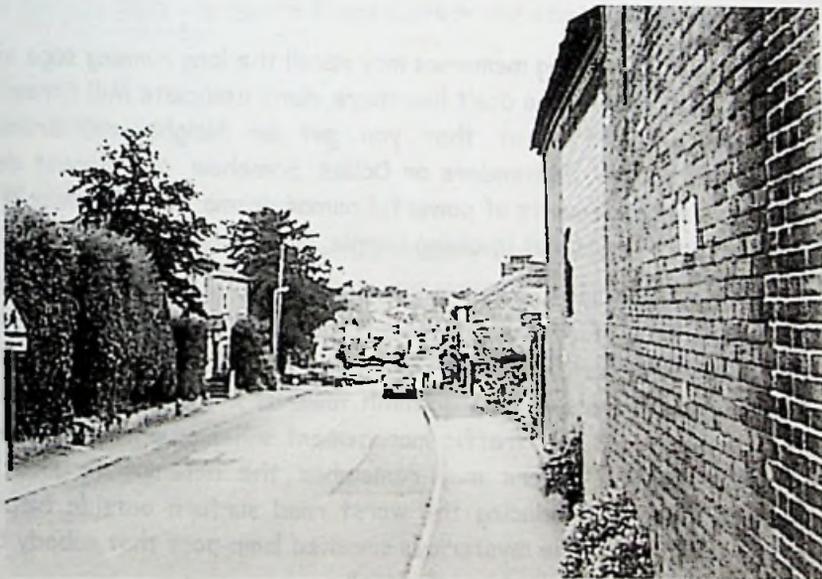
Next day was an earlier start, we went to Bayeux. We looked at the tapestry, it was amazing how old and long it was. We went to Arromanches in the afternoon. We looked at the remains of Mulberry Harbour and around the town and most people bought a crepe (French pancake). The following day we went to Dinard Olympic swimming pool. It was an indoor sea-water pool. After lunch we went to a Chevrerie (goats cheese farm). It was explained how the goats cheese was made, and we tasted some, it was like cream cheese. Next we went to the medieval town of Dinan. Many of the streets look liked the Shambles in York.

The next day we sadly had to leave. We spent the morning travelling and then stopped at St Mere Eglise. We had lunch there and looked around the Airborne Museum. We then carried on to Cherbourg, the ferry sailed at 6.00pm. Again the ferry was calm. We finally arrived in Harbury at 12.45am, The trip was enjoyed by everyone, as the French would say, "C'etait tres bien"

by Katy Brown, Lucy Thompson and Julie Bennett



Looking down Mill Street



AUGUST 1989**An open letter to car drivers in Harbury**

You should all have noticed as you drive into Harbury that there are strange signs on poles at the side of the road. They are circular, with a red ring surrounding two black numbers on a white background. The two numbers are three and nought. If you look inside your car there is a speedometer, somewhere above the steering wheel. Look closely at it and you will see the same numbers - a three and a nought, 30.

Now for the important part: all the time that you are driving in Harbury, the needle on your speedometer should stay below the three and nought. Not the four and nought, or the five and nought, or the six and nought, as some of you seem to think. During the day and during the night. Everywhere in Harbury.

Thirty miles an hour may seem slow. It is slow. But with school holidays starting, and kids playing, those few seconds extra on your journey may save a life.

Andy Tasker

DECEMBER 1989**Mill Street rides again**

Some readers with long memories may recall the long running saga of Mill Street. Most people who don't live there, don't associate Mill Street with the sort of excitement that you get on Neighbours, Brookside, Coronation Street, Eastenders or Dallas. Somehow, Mill Street doesn't offer the same elements of powerful human drama. Nevertheless it does have peculiar events, not involving people, but involving things.

These happenings are part of the history of Harbury in the same way as the Bridge is part of the history of Ladbroke. If you are a long term resident of Harbury you may remember the Maxim Homes sponsored drama of the garage sliding downhill towards Mill Street. More recent arrivals may recall the traffic management scheme, which masqueraded as sewer laying. Others may remember the attempt to slow down speeding cars by producing the worst road surface outside Nepal. Or again, do you recall the mysterious smashed lamp-post that nobody broke, or the saga of the useless bus shelter?

Recently, some residents have been getting restless at the lack of excitement. Some have even tried to move house. Somehow losing a dog down a crack in the pavement, or viewing a damaged chestnut tree doesn't seem to offer much dramatic challenge. But suddenly all this has changed. They are building a new Doctors' Surgery. Suddenly Mill Street has moved to the centre stage once again.

Most building sites are fairly straightforward, particularly when you come to dig out the foundations - but not apparently on Mill Street. The Surgery is being built on ground that once housed a pumping station and a deep sewage settling tank. When the building was pulled down the rubble was thrown into the old tank. The operation doesn't appear to have been very successful. Rumour in Mill Street has it that so far the Surgery Contractors have lost two JCB's, a dumper truck and a lorry loaded with bricks down the hole. It could be true, because you can't see them sticking out of the hole.

Some residents are still trying to understand the sequence of events. They know the tank was originally dug out and eventually filled in. But now it looks as though it is being dug out, so that it can be filled in, so that it can be dug out to lay the foundations. Unless of course they are actually adding a cellar to the original plans which could be a good solution. Mill Street Strikes Back - or Seven Trent Come Home all is forgiven.

AUGUST 1990

The new Surgery

The new Doctors' Surgery was opened in early July and the new facilities are excellent. Each Doctor has their own consulting suite and there are special rooms for the nurses and administration. The building is suitable for access for disabled people. The new appointment system is working efficiently and has greatly reduced the waiting time.

JANUARY 1991

The snowy weather dominates the news this month. Harbury was badly affected, with perhaps a fall of snow which drifted considerably. Mike Bloxham's feature photograph shows conditions at Mill Street.



The thanks of the whole village is due to those who made such magnificent efforts to overcome the conditions. Among these we must include all the good neighbours, the milk deliverers, the shops and pubs, the post persons, paper delivering boys and girls, the doctors, and all the many people who supported the Christmas Fayre.

FEBRUARY 1991

It seems such a short while ago that the ending of the Cold War, and the breaking out of democracy all over Eastern Europe gave us all great hope for the last decade of the 20th Century. Now we are plunged into a major war, and the future is once again fraught with danger. There is little we can do in this quiet backwater to influence events, but we can offer support to those amongst us who have loved ones in the Gulf.

Harbury is now a commuter zone with the opening of the M40, but will see its services further diminished with the closure of the Midland Bank. The inconvenience this will cause seems likely to be out of proportion with the small saving to the Bank. Harbury may not have a Bank for much longer, but it does have a very expensive new car park at the Village Hall.

Please use it and don't block the front of the Hall, which could be dangerous in an emergency.

APRIL 1991

This month marks a sad but historic occasion - the last day of the Midland Bank in Harbury. It is sad that rural areas are losing more and more of their services, and the adage used in adverts by the Post Office - use it or lose it really demands our attention. If we make shopping in Leamington our aim, then we will turn Harbury from a village into a suburb.

JUNE 1991

Harbury Library



Your library has been reprieved! Many thanks to Mr. Kimber and all those who wrote protest letters and signed the petition. To ensure that the library does not come under threat again you must make sure that you USE it. If you are not a library member do come along to see what we have to offer. Membership is free on production of two items of identification, and your ticket can be used at any of the Warwickshire County Libraries. We have an excellent book stock covering most subjects and a wide selection of novels, children's books and large print books. We can also obtain books from other libraries for a small charge.

Sue Bell

FEBRUARY 1992**Power - who needs it?**

I've been feeling a bit neglected by the Gas Board. All around me my neighbours have been enjoying the sound of pneumatic drills, signifying the historic beginnings of British Gas coming to Ladbroke. So far they've decided to miss out 'Bridge Cottage' and I didn't really mind too much, until I discovered a terse note on my doormat from the Electricity Board declaring that Ladbroke will be without electricity for two days next week. This must be at least the fourth occasion that we've had a long spell without power, since the heavy snowfall of December 1990. I thought that they must have finished repairing snow damage by now; what on earth were they up to now? I decided to phone the Electricity Board to find out what was going on, after all I should think the residents of the Outer Hebrides stand less chance needing torches than us sorely tried Ladbroke residents.

The Electricity Board said indignantly that half of Ladbroke had been on the phone to him that morning, why were we such a Militant lot. I said we had got fed up with wearing six cardigans and dining by candlelight. Whereupon he gave me a very lengthy technical description of what needed doing to ensure that next time it snows, the village would not be cut off. Personally I'd rather take my chances, it may not even snow this year, but one thing is for certain - we are going to be very cold and miserable in Ladbroke next week!

Kate Liverton

FEBRUARY 1992

The Lych Gate has now gone to the specialist woodworking company for its refurbishment. The first report on their findings is to the effect that its condition is worse than anticipated but nonetheless we hope to have it back in position by the end of February. We still need to find some £700 to pay for the work but the promise of grant aid from Stratford District Council and from our own Parish Council has made the restoration a possibility; without it we might have been looking at a bare churchyard entrance - permanently!

APRIL 1993

Why Pirie Close?

Dr. Pirie lived at Ashton House Harbury, and started to practice here towards the end of the last century. He had a surgery twice daily, but mornings only on Saturday and Sunday. He visited every day come hail, rain or shine, mostly driven by his chauffeur George Savage. His greatest pleasure was the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, to which he devoted a great deal of his time, and in which he held the title County Surgeon. He had an ambulance dedicated to him, but this has now gone.

For a number of years, he ran a colony near Deppers Bridge for the treatment of Tuberculosis, where the patients could be kept in isolation. It consisted of a number of shelters, some revolving, a hospital building, recreation room, kitchen, bathroom, surgery linen room, nurses room, doctors room, secretaries room, stores etc. He was well known in his profession for the success he achieved in this field, having had several papers published in the Medical Journal, and received letters from all over the world regarding the success of his research and treatment of Tuberculosis.

When holidaying in Scotland, the land of his birth, he was able to render some assistance to King George V at Fochabers Castle in Morayshire, and later saw King George at his request, during the King's last illness. He was decorated by the Duke of Gloucester at Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh, with the 'Order of St. John', for his work. After serving throughout the 1914-1918 war, he dedicated his life to his patients.

In his surgery hung this amusing little rhyme:

The stork is a bird with a great big bill,

He brings his presents where he will.

Then come the doctor and when he's through,

You may find he's got a big bill too.

Few people found the last line true in his case.

Dr. Pirie died at Harbury on August 4th 1947, and is buried in Ufton churchyard.



Ivy Lane



SEPTEMBER 1994

The end of a glorious summer draws near. Preparation for a new academic year will be uppermost in the minds of our younger villagers beginning their school lives, and those moving on to new places of learning. We wish them all success and happiness.

During this month, the Parish Council took delivery of the new "Village Computer." We shall have the use of this for the production of the Harbury & Ladbroke News. We are sure you will agree with us that the presentation of this month's issue is greatly improved. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for their support in the purchasing of the computer.

With Stratford District Council changing their refuse contract to Biffa Waste, collection day for Harbury is now Friday. Many problems have been experienced and we are sure that our District Councillors are monitoring the situation.

MAY 1995

The politically correct Youth Club

Little did we know how much media attention we would attract when we suggested to the Carnival Committee that there should be a King, as well as a Queen! Members felt that the concept of a Carnival Queen was sexist, so this year we have redressed the balance! As well as coverage in the local press, we hit the nationals (Daily Telegraph). I also had a two minute interview on Radio Five Live and Gillian Kerr and I did an interview for CWR. Radio Essex has also taped an interview to use on its programme about village carnivals. Dean had fled the village to avoid the publicity (he was on holiday with his parents!).

The actual Carnival Queen/King evening was a great success. Twelve girls and nine boys stood for election. The winning couple, Gillian Kerr and Dean Merrick were voted for by the young people of Harbury. Midge Keen and Chris Carter from the Carnival Committee presented Gillian and Dean with the £20 prize money. The evening ended with a disco. Many thanks to all who entered the competition and made the evening such a success.

Vicki Holroyd

JUNE 1995

Dear Editors

I have lived in Harbury for many years and my friend and one time neighbour keeps your magazines for me. I still read them all through. I read a letter by Mrs. Enefer and I do sympathise with her. On my recent visit, I was so saddened that the *Smithy* had gone. I can still hear the sound of Sid's hammer. We lived right opposite, you see, and my youngest son could often be found there.

So many differences since we were there, Mrs. Treen's little shop just below, and further down Chapel Street, we spent our sweet coupons at Bayliss's, and Mr. Bayliss used to walk round with a tray suspended in front of him selling oranges. Up the Terrace lived Mr. French, *Topper* as he was known, and he delivered newspapers. He had a large tin sign on his house with *News of the World* on it. I have a snapshot of that. Then *Thornicrofts'* bakery was always ready to cook for us. Bob's grandfather came over for his $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of beer on the dot of 10.00 am and at 6.00 pm on the dot, to my uncle's pub, *The New Inn*, as I shall always remember it, not the silly name it now wears.

A row of cottages stood just down Mill Street, and Frank Fletcher lived in one and cut men's hair. On the corner was *Alcocks*, the butcher's, Stan Smith next, the shoe mender, and next again *Birds* another butcher. Opposite them the Co-Op and down the lane the Mill. That is a real landmark of Harbury. I have snaps taken from the top. I visited Harbury every year as a child, then went there to live in 1940.

The *big* school was then opposite the Co-Op coalyard. *Messers'* shop next, where we spent our pennies on sweets, and I can remember *markets* in the Bullring. I was often sent up to the Top Shop by my aunty (who now has the Post Office). Aunty said the cheese from there was the best. Of course Mrs. Cooper then kept the Post Office across the road from *Alcocks*.

Down Binswood End, Mrs. Boynton also had a lovely little shop and in Farm Street there was another *Thornicrofts*. On towards the Old New Inn, there was a large pond where we could slide when it froze over in winter.

Sadly, so many of these things have gone forever, but if you print this it may jog a few memories.

Mrs. G. Colwell, Newquay, Cornwall

APRIL 1996

Memories of the Wight School, 1920 - 1933

as told to me by Joan Clarke

My most vivid memory of the Wight School, which I attended in the late 1920's to 1933, is the mass of steel nibbed pens, which hung from the rafters of the main school. These have now been covered by a false ceiling. I was told it was a keen sport practised by the older children, to throw their pens, dart-like into the roof. Whoever achieved the most pens to hang there was applauded!

The desks were for two children, with a rigid form and had holes for inkwells. It was the monitor's job to fill the inkwells. These were placed out each morning and collected in a wooden tray at 4.00pm. The pens were steel nibbed and it was a disaster to cross a nib and have to ask for a new one.

Mr. Dickens and Mr. Farrow were keen musicians. Each morning we had a singing lesson, Mr. Dickens taught the Tonic Solfa, he played the piano and we sang. Once we gave an Operetta for parents and people in the village. The costumes were all made by Mrs. Dickens and it was all about the good works of the pixies.

Miss Bustin taught us to sew, mend and darn. She also taught country dancing. Mr. Mole allowed us to use the new dance hall in Ivy Lane. Mrs. Miriam Alcock played the piano; she wore long dangly earrings, which fascinated us girls. Miss Bustin's classroom was the room immediately inside the (library) door. Mr. Dickens' room was divided off by a screen, which was wooden and painted cream. In the corner of Miss Bustin's room by the door was a large pot bellied coke burning stove.

At the time approaching Christmas, Miss Bustin allowed us to gather near the stove while she read Christmas Carol. It was magical. They looked so festive. The partition between the classrooms was removed on the last day before the holidays and in the afternoon various guests appeared and we had a concert of songs, carols and recitations. We all wore our best clothes for this occasion and felt very smart.

The school may not meet with today's regulations, but it was a very happy school with excellent teachers.

Celia Barrett

JUNE 1996

From the Rector

Many people want proof that God exists. Vicar, "what line do I take when discussing this with an unbeliever?" There are many lines of approach - God made each person unique and the reasons for unbelief and atheism are as numerous as the unbelievers. But I think there are one or two general principles. Unbelievers seem always to suppose that they themselves are hardheaded, rational people who 'face the facts' and see no need for God. Christians, they imagine, are sentimental, ignorant and emotional people, self-deceivers, who want to believe and in consequence do believe. The truth is, however, that unbelief and atheism is no more rational than a whole-hearted acceptance of religious faith. So in discussing your faith with an unbeliever, I would say:

1. Be factual and humble. Do not approach any question with the article 'I know' nor allow them to suppose that they 'know' more than you do, for unbelievers and believers alike 'walk by faith not by sight'. The problem is that their faith is different from ours.
2. Remember too that they are individuals, quite unique. Their fears and hopes, their disappointments and ambitions, their regrets and achievements are not the same as yours. And what seems important to you may be completely irrelevant to them. Try to look for the emotional basis of their un-belief for the thing that hardened them and made them unbelievers. For I am convinced that no person is an unbeliever by nature, just as I am convinced that not everybody is a deep-down believer.
3. Never be disappointed if you achieve nothing. Conversion is the work of the grace of God and so long as you are willing to be a channel of grace, you have done all that you can.

Above all remember that the real enemy is not militant unbelief, but cold indifference. And God alone knows the answer to that.

Fr. Roy

MAY 1997

A most important warning!

Flatworms are already in this locality.

Flatworms, the appalling invaders from Australia and New Zealand, have been found recently in Warwickshire, in Radford Semele, Leamington Spa. It is essential that we should be on the lookout for them in our own gardens and that if we find them we report it to the authorities.

The Danger: The flatworm's favourite food is the earthworm. Earthworms are vital for healthy soil because they make tunnels underground which improve the texture of the soil and allow oxygen to reach the roots of the plants. Without earthworms the land can become dense, hard to work and waterlogged.

Description: There are two kinds of flatworm. The New Zealand one is 4" to 6" long, dark brown coloured with pale edges. Its eggs are like oval black currants. The Australian flatworm is 1½" to 3½" long and pink in colour. When under stress, the creatures turn into a 'squishy mush'.

What to do if you find them:

1. Catch them. If you lay black plastic flat on the garden, the flatworms will collect underneath.
2. Send a specimen to the Government Researchers.
3. Kill the rest either by squashing them (which is not easy to do thoroughly) or by drowning them in strong salty water.

May we escape the scourge!

Arthur Measures

JUNE 1997**Harbury Chronicles**

You may have read in the local press of our £5,000 lottery award. This extra money will enable us to use more advanced technology, such as digital film, giving us better quality and more flexibility for editing. Ultimately this will mean a more durable film capable of producing good quality videos. We are about to sign a contract with Warwick Partington our professional director/cameraman, who will guide us through this

amazing project. Once we have agreed complete costing, including insurance, any additional monies will be used to ensure some sort of continuity of the interest engendered by the film; perhaps in the form of a film club.

To assist us with the script we need to hear from anyone with a specialist interest, e.g. birds, trains, local flora and fauna, etc. A few poems on local themes would be nice - so put your thinking caps on and don't be shy!

Anne Megeney

MAY 1998

ROB DAVIS - Harbury Fields Farm

Rob had listened to the weather forecast the previous day and realised that it promised to be an extremely wet Thursday. He had moved the 200 ewes which had already lambed into the field adjacent to the windmill, whilst the twenty ewes, which had not delivered were in the farm buildings behind the house.

In the late afternoon the level of water in the fields between the farm and the Rugby Club rose to between one and two feet as the drains could not cope with the downpour. By 4.00pm there were two gushing streams flowing on either side of the farm and whilst one flood found the low ground into a small copse before making its way towards the Fosse Way, the other torrent was tearing its way through the farm buildings. Rob managed to pen the pregnant ewes on the only remaining patch of high ground inside the barns and managed to save them from the rising water.

Even now two weeks later he has not been able to do any field work as the fields are too waterlogged, but as he commented: Farming makes you philosophical - you have to learn to live with the weather!

WILL RUSSELL - Middle Road Farm

Will lives at the farm on the opposite side of the road to Rob and by 4.00pm he was aware of water running through the farm sheds from the flooded fields alongside the railway line. Again there was so much water that it was impossible for the culverts to cope with the continual heavy rain. Will took out the tractor and trailer in an effort to get his flock to higher ground but found that they were hemmed in by a wire fence which needed to be cut to allow the animals to escape. On the far side of the

track the water was half way up the railway embankment and Will had to encourage the ewes and the lambs to swim in the swirling water in order to find safe ground.

Although he has since heard that floods on this scale have only happened once in thirty years, he does not want to have a repeat of the experience which left so many of his animals in a miserable wet condition for several hours.

AUGUST 1998

Sheltered accommodation in Harbury

Is there a need for some form of Sheltered Accommodation in Harbury?

YES! Personally I think there is. For a village of our size, it is sad to feel that disabled, elderly or persons in need of respite care have, in all probability, to leave the village and find these needs met elsewhere when they would prefer to stay in the familiar surroundings they know, with the love and support of the people in the community. Is this an isolated view or that of many in the village?

If you share this view or have ideas on how this idea could be developed please contact me.

Dorothy Barr

NOVEMBER 1998

An appreciation

I am certain that those of us who enjoyed the events of the Twinning weekend without having had to bear the huge burden of its organisation would want formally to record our sincere congratulations and thanks to all those in any way involved with its planning and execution, especially the Twinning Association's organising committee. Also I want to record the immense pride I felt in the music making of our school children at the Saturday morning ceremony and on their conduct during what must have been for them a rather tedious occasion. Our uniformed children's groups also performed their role in the ceremony with great panache and the school had been prepared most attractively as the venue for both the morning ceremony and the evening dinner.

JUNE 1999**May Day weekend**

My alarm clock rang at 4.15am. I crawled out of bed, peered into the dark and thought to myself, "why am I doing this?" It was a Saturday morning and I could have had a lie-in, instead I was up and donning bells and baldricks ready to dance in the May Day dawn at Chesterton Windmill. What comes over me at this time every year? What's so great about leaping up and down on a draughty hilltop in semi-darkness? There is no rational explanation.

Despite that, I and twenty three other Morris dancers thought it was a sufficiently good idea to be there. As we approached the Mill two shapes stirred at the base of one of the pillars. What at first looked like a couple of stranded seals was in fact Mike Putnam and Doug Freeman in sleeping bags making sure they didn't miss the first dance.

This year more than forty people joined us as an audience, some of whom were brave enough, daft enough or simply cold enough to participate in our last dance all around the Windmill. We are always pleased and flattered when people take the trouble to come and watch us. Dancing solely to the rising sun or to the lights of "Welcome Break" feels faintly ludicrous.

As our audience finally drifted away, we collected up our melodeons and fiddles and made our way to Celia Neill's house. Fortunately, Janny Freeman does not make a virtue of stupidity and doesn't join us at the Windmill. Instead she cooks us a magnificent English breakfast, which we tend to regard as an essential part of the ritual. This year Avril Bates from Leamington helped her prepare the platefuls of bacon, sausages and scrambled eggs. We sat around wherever we could find a space, or wandered from room to room joining and leaving the various conversations. Later, when we left it wasn't simply because we had devoured every last bacon rind and toast crumb, but because we had another appointment in Leamington.

Gill Barber

OCTOBER 1999

Pussy down the well nearly!

Newcomers to the village, Louise and Neil Wilson had an unusual welcome to Harbury when their pet cat Burt disappeared down an open drain cover. The couple, who live in Hillside, were forced to call in the Fire Brigade after the furry feline refused to come out of the underground network.

It took six fire-fighters, four hundred gallons of water, two chimney brushes and a distress signal to get the pussy out. We had not seen him for a day and a half, said Louise. I called him for his dinner and could hear him crying. Louise and Neil set off round the estate to see if they could find their furry friend and eventually decided the animal was underneath them.

We could hear him meowing but the sound was coming from under our feet, said Neil. I realised we were standing near a drain cover and when I bent down and put my ear to the ground I could hear him much louder. The couple called and called the cat but to no avail, so Louise rang to see if the fire service could help. A retained crew from Southam turned up just before quarter to seven and began the rescue operation. They soon discovered an open drain cover down the road, which was how Burt got in. It quickly became clear the cat was not coming out the way he had gone in. Sub Officer Mike Hill ordered the covers of four more drains to be lifted and sent firemen down two of them. The men called and called the cat but by this stage it was too frightened to come out. Next they tried chimney brushes but the shafts were not long enough to reach the animal. They then let off a distress signal down the drain in a bid to scare the cat out but it still didn't budge.

It was getting dark and it was obvious the cat was not moving, so I ordered the men to put water down the drains to flush the animal out, said Mr. Hill. Leading fireman Andy Duckett went down one drain while jet hoses were turned on down other outlets. After nearly an hour and a half, knee deep in cold water, Mr. Duckett could hear the cat's cries getting louder. Several minutes later a small black and very wet, Burt appeared and Mr. Duckett grabbed him.

Terrified but safe at last the cat was handed over to a relieved Louise who took the animal inside to dry him off. We were so grateful to get Burt back, said Neil. The firemen were great and we would like to thank them for saving him.

I would like to add that it is an unusual way to meet your neighbours, but it was a pleasure - after they had got the cat back of course.

Carol Geere (of Hillside)

FEBRUARY 2000

Harbury in lights on Millennium night

The *Guardian* newspaper article of December 29th 1999 told the nation the three best places to celebrate Millennium Eve were:

Edinburgh Castle, Trafalgar Square and Chapel Street, Harbury.

What can one say? As usual, Harbury came up trumps with all of the pubs and the Village Club full to brimming. The Village Hall was open to all with a giant TV screen to relay the nation's festivities, and children's entertainment was available along with exceptionally good, free refreshments for the revellers. The fancy dress competition, which was judged in the Village Hall, was a huge success with the winners receiving donated prizes. Also, the Church provided an open house in the Tom Hauley Room, again with free refreshments and entertainment. A truly communal effort.

The millennium eve celebrations culminated at midnight in Chapel Street with several hundred villagers and friends congregating together. There were fireworks, music and spectacular lighting around the centre of the village including the unique "2000" emblazoned on the windmill, which miraculously came to life just on the stroke of midnight. Unfortunately we were not successful in obtaining a lottery grant for extra lighting, but we extend our grateful thanks to Harbury Parish Council who bailed us out at the last minute with funds for the additional illuminations.

There are still some of the wonderful Harbury millennium commemorative glasses for sale at £1.50 (not the £1.20 which was originally, incorrectly advertised). These can still be obtained from the Village Club, pubs, Mugleston's, Anne Woodward and Danny Killian.

We would also like to take this opportunity of thanking Muggleston's, the pubs, the Village Club and the Church for selling these glasses prior to millennium eve. All monies raised from the sale of glasses helped to fund the celebrations.

Finally, we would like to extend our grateful thanks to all those who helped to make this millennium eve such a success, particularly in donating food, financial support, prizes and help in setting up, and clearing up of the Village Hall and Chapel Street. The numbers of individuals and groups who supported the initiative with time and effort once again demonstrated the unique community spirit that made Harbury the place to be on Millennium Eve.

The outgoing Harbury Millennium Committee

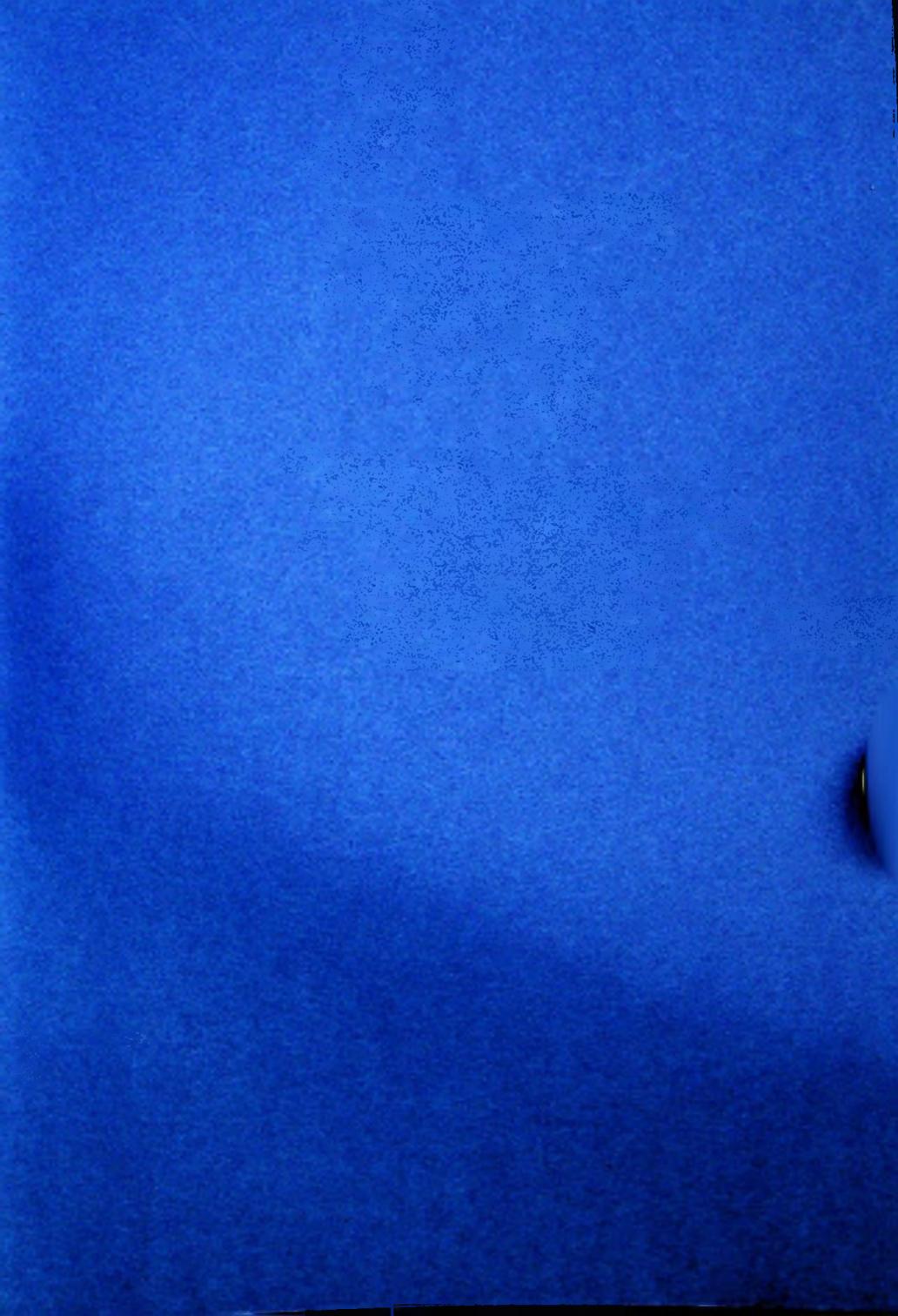


Harbury Windmill



Chapel Street





Harbury & Ladbroke News

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