

A Commentary on the various activities of the Harpenden Society from 1961 to 1989 followed by other papers back to 1947 (Society resumes after the war and changes its name) and to its founding in 1930.

*Chairman's
Harp Soc's copy*

To the Harpenden Society Committee –the “Final version” with the further, and important 1961-1977 documentation from the Hon. Sec’s records merged (the Chairman-derived version having been circulated with the pre-6/9/10 Committee Papers)

From John Davis, December 2010 following my offer at the January committee meeting to go through and hopefully summarize a large box of documents from the 1961-1989 period inherited by the current Chairman.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY USED

I realise we all have too much to read but I hope the following commentary on the Society’s activities, as gleaned from about 30 years of Treasurer’s reports and other documents, are of value as an indication of the activities we then arranged or participated in (e.g. Annual Dinners and as an Exhibitor at the Town Council’s Spotlight on Leisure). The on/off financial connections with the ULVG (Upper Lea Valley Group), a spin-off from the Society in the early 1970s (and in a sense the more obvious contributor to the local scene through its activities at the Batford Springs Local Nature Reserve – the ULVG renamed 2010 the “Batford Springs Volunteers” to reflect that), are also mentioned.

The documents themselves were inherited by our current Chairman, Anthony Steele, and consisted of a Treasurer’s red ledger and over a dozen folders containing detailed records of the Society’s financial transactions over the period, associated bank statements and old cheque books (mainly fully used) which were respectively shredded or burnt, draft and final accounts, (the latter kept and inserted in the ledger), occasional Newsletters etc.; in total I estimate well over 2,000 items. For practicality, the non identifiable items were torn into strips and disposed of in the recycling bin but a commercial scale shredder would be useful for a similar exercise on more recent documents. This whole exercise was triggered by a suggestion that the Society’s records should be lodged with the County Archivist. Overall I reduced the total bulk by I estimate around 95% * and, although I should perhaps not say so, I don’t think we have lost anything crucial during the exercise which I think despite the labour involved (!) was quite valuable in providing a brief historical record of our activities during that time.

* Annual income/expenditure summaries for 1975/89, latterly with an explanatory “Reconciliation” of the accounts, and occasional ULVG data, have been inserted in the red ledger – A CORE DOCUMENT FOR US TO RETAIN AT THIS STAGE (though the Archivist “would be happy to store it and that would keep it in good condition” but overall I felt best not to – sa not to Archivist). The only other items surviving the clear-out are the Attachments to my “Commentary”, labelled Docs. 1-17, for eventual submission to the County Archivist BUT THEN RETURNED TO US.

*Subsequently recognised impossible to photocopy made
for our retention of all such sent to the Archivist*
[Signature] 24/1/11

After completing the above exercise, two of us went through contemporaneous documents in the Secretary's keeping and I collated the whole into one package covering 1961 to 1989 and now I submit them simply in the form of a "Commentary" on our activities during that era along with, e.g., example invoices, such as the cost of hiring the various hall we used for meetings over that time. Meanwhile the Treasurers active during that period, and some current committee members, have read the entire Commentary before it goes to the Archivist to check that I have omitted any personal or confidential details.

In future, a similar exercise could helpfully be applied to the post-1990 period where I am sure some of the complexities of the banking transactions (e.g. the methods then used for collecting membership subscriptions) will have been simplified – but that in my view is a task for the future after we have lodged the pre-1990 information with the County Archivist.

TO THE COUNTY ARCHIVIST

The following is a summary, in the form of a Commentary with, where relevant, attached papers (as Doc.1a etc)* of some of the activities of the Harpenden Society as gleaned from extensive Treasurer etc. reports over the period 1961-1989 that we hope you may consider lodging in the County Archive (cf. the e-mail exchange of correspondence with our current Chairman, Mr. Steele, early September 2009). Producing this summary involved the considerable reduction in the voluminous items retained over the years (multiple subscription slips, invoices etc. – variously shredded or kept as “Doc.1a etc) but we hope little of substance has been lost, and occasionally details of entirely local interest have been mentioned for historical reasons. Thus far, the Treasurers’ ledger of Income/Expenditure for the period has been retained by the Society along with summary Annual Accounts (annual subscription 2/6d in 1961 to 50p and decimalisation in 1972 to £4 currently for an individual or £5 a family) although the information gleaned from those documents as to the Society’s activities has of course been included in the Commentary (and because of that source and also for convenience, much of that Commentary is on a year by year basis).

The Society operates on three basic levels:

- (a) It arranges and hosts, a series of mainly monthly meetings during the Autumn to Spring period each year (for interest the 1976/77 season had rather fewer, five such meetings on 22/9, 1/12, 2/2, 7/3 and 10/5 (see Doc. 1a)) with speakers covering topics of some local interest and relevance and at which typically, nowadays, 50/60 people attend; and to varying degrees over the years there have been additional special events which will be outlined later.
- (b) The Society issues a Newsletter quarterly and this is the main means of communication for the bulk of the membership, ca. 1,000 currently (300 in 1963, 900 in 1978), and which contains a variety of items including reports on at least some of the meetings mentioned above – and which are now sent regularly to the County Archivist and have been since Sept. '81, housed as a journal run in the “local periodicals etc” Section I believe). For interest, copies of those Newsletters found within the bulk of the documentation studied are attached as Docs 2 and include both the January and April 1980 Newsletters, the Society’s Golden Jubilee Year, and attached to which was a sketch entitled “High Street Concourse replanted as part of the Society’s 50th Anniversary” [opposite what was then Woolworths]; and also, sporadically, previous such Newsletters and “Annual Reports” etc back to 1961 (the earlier such apparently issued only once year, in the “Autumn”, as a single typed sheet; also apparently only one formal meeting, in Oct./Nov., with a March AGM).
- (c) Various specialist groups, which as appropriate comment on matters such as new building development, encroachment or other activities to do with the Common, links with other related organisations etc.

*A few omitted – see footnote p.4

The quarterly meetings have been held in various halls over the years e.g. the "Harpenden Urban District Council Hall" in 1972-74, in the mid-seventies the Small ("Southdown") meeting room of the Harpenden Public Halls which, being run by St. Albans District Council (SADC), charged for that service as indicated in some attached representative invoices (Docs 1a/b) and also for a longish period using the hall of a closely related group, the Local History Society, which was founded in 1973 by attendees at a local WEA series of classes and "as an offshoot of the Harpenden Society" (as stated in a recent Harpenden Directory by Ron Staines and Diana Parrott).

Relationships with allied organisations.

For much or all of the period concerned, the Society associated itself with the aims of groups such as the Hertfordshire Society, now acting as the local branch of CPRE (then the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, now Campaign for the Protection of Rural England), the Herts. and Middx Wildlife Trust, HMWT) the then Commons Preservation Society (now the Open Spaces Society?) through the payment to them of an annual subscription and more loosely with the then Keep Britain Tidy Group and the London Green Belt Council. Connections with other groups, such as the Civic Trust, later in the period are mentioned under individual years.

The Society's Constitution, and more generally its remit as of 1930 and 1964, was reiterated February 1973 as part of a questionnaire to members mainly to take account of the appearance "over recent years" of various working parties concerned with local planning issues and of the UPPER LEA VALLEY GROUP (ULVG) which, it was recognised, following the production of a report in 1971 (q.v.) and a subsequent public meeting, "functions as a virtually autonomous body with the support of the Society". The Society's own Constitution was amended again 9/3/81 (and more recently in the late 1990s? expanded to include a more direct reference to the natural environment rather than seemingly as initially the built environment) – these documents attached as Docs 3.

Year by year events.*

1961-1972: The Treasurer's ledger contained the usual items such as subscriptions to HMWT etc. as noted above, but there was little noteworthy in the general documentation (hence mainly disregarded) in the current Chairman's possession early 2010. However a parallel accumulation of newsletters, single-page Annual Reports along with information on the early activities of the ULVG (above) held by the Hon. Sec. provided information on most of the "missing years", both sets of original records having been merged in the process.

* A schematic from 1951, although pre-dating this (1961-89) period, is attached as Annex A as it outlines development proposals for part of the 1961-73 period of this Commentary. In addition, newsletters and/or Annual Reports for several of these years are lodged as Docs 2 with some of the highlights noted within individual years.

1961: An "Autumn" newsletter (in typescript on one side of a foolscap sheet) noted that Col. Scutt having been Chairman for many years was at his request replaced by a Mr. Goacher (R.A. Finch as Hon. Sec.). It also noted with regret that The Granary off Crabtree Lane (and on the line of an ancient drove road which followed the ridge

of land running S.E.-N.W.: cf. "Roman roads in S.E. England" by Viatores) was to be demolished as part of a development scheme and there was a danger that some allegedly Roman remains within it would be lost. Similarly that the bellows from the blacksmiths near what was the Foresters Arms (now near the access road off Bowers Parade to the new building site) – with the suggestion that should such relics be salvaged in time in future, then it would be helpful to have a small local museum for them [which eventually emerged in the form of the Local History Society]. The Society sponsored Hatching Green's entry in the Best Kept Village competition and the Town Planning Sub-committee was regularly screening and commenting on, where necessary, around 50 development applications en route to the Council and County Planning Committee – with particular concern about the changes to Arden Grove [including the replacement of the tall mansion-like buildings used for dentists etc. by the current commercial developments]. Finally, the Society's "Annual Outing" was to Oxford (no details available) and the Hon. Sec. concluded by noting the cordial relationships which existed with "the officials at Harpenden Hall" and the two local-newspaper Editors. An attached note announced the Autumn meeting to be held 16/10/61 in the Small Public Hall where a new "Origin and Aims" document was to be circulated [not available] and a Civic Trust film on Windsor screened. It was noted that the previous year's equivalent meeting attracted "only" 136 members with the hope that more would attend "this time" [more than our current attendances but then only one meeting p.a.].

1962: Again only an "Autumn" issue found, which suggests that in those days there was one such a year. This issue included a plea to members to help carry out the aims of the Society: "safeguarding amenity, prevention of vandalism, opposition to unsuitable buildings and tasteless signs and the often senseless destruction of hedges and trees" and said the "creeping tide of bricks and mortar and its effects in particular on the Meadow Walk area" (presumably the development of what is now the Southdown Industrial Estate) was "deplored" – although there was a hint that some had suggested the Society had been too backward-looking in some respects. There was a hope that the Society could help in the "teaching of Good Citizenship" in local schools and had been involved in devising a Local History Quiz for them (with the "unfailing support" of local head teachers and the Press). The Society had various watercolours of old Harpenden in the Council's possession mounted and framed and displayed in the Public Library (no indication of the outcome) and its Annual Outing was to Guildford Cathedral, enjoyed by 43 members and friends.

1963: The Autumn newsletter and Annual Report noted membership of 300+ (but "should be more" with the town's growth). Cllr Colin Curl, the new Chairman; the relationship with the HUDC, which "frequently seeks our opinion" on developments, was "cordial". A big "increase in illegal parking on the Common at the weekends", which the Council responded to by renewing the deterrent ridges. The Society and Council opposed a 7-storey block at the Walkers Road/St. Johns Road junction at an enquiry [subsequently reduced to 3] and fear that Luton Airport may start taking jets [which materialised and caused much objection in the late 1960s and emergence of an anti-noise group, LADACAN, in 1968] but "mercifully the proposed N.-S. runway not currently envisaged".

The Annual Outing, 38 members (16/6d inclusive of coach, entrance, tea etc.) was to Blenheim on 25th May. Hatching Green second in the Best Kept ("very small") Village Competition.

1964: The Annual Report (no newsletter found) noted a 24-member Committee, meeting 8 times p.a., which commented favourably on the July "Traffic Scheme for

Harpenden" as presented by the Chairman of the HUDC Highways Cttee. The committee also commented on the redevelopment in the central shopping area, with input from the "County Planning Authority", hoping that the "new buildings are in keeping with the character of the village". Autumn meeting 28 Oct. filled the Bourne concert hall, Salisbury Avenue, to hear a talk by Dr. Dudley Stamp of the R. Geog. Soc. on the Nature Conservancy. Pressure from the Society led to a letter box being installed in Breadcroft Lane for the local elderly. Big H.C.C./MP/Herts. Society opposition to the proposed doubling in size Stevenage New Town.

Annual outing to Claydon House, home of the Verney family in Bucks, on 23 May; 25 attended, cost as in 1963. Hatching Green again successful (c.f. 1963).

1965: There was a note in the Treasurer's ledger that we advertised in the Herts. Advertiser for membership (outcome unknown). Despite the wine and cheese refreshments and the showing of a film on traffic problems and the role of the (then new?) Wardens, the "lively" 24/3 AGM attracted "only 50" – but a stirring Presidential address on the threat of sprawl led to a lead story in the Herts. Advertiser. £10 donated towards a bench in Breadcroft Lane. Concern at the felling of Thompson's Close conifers and the proliferation of shop signs, some "lurid", over which the Council has "little control".

The Annual Outing on a "very wet" 12 June attracted 58 members and friends and was to N. Mymms Park and Gorhambury.

1966: The Annual Report highlighted the launch, at the Autumn meeting (12th October with wine and cheese), of the "Make Harpenden Tidy" anti-litter campaign, the meeting being addressed by Sir Rupert Speir of the Keep Britain Tidy Group. Mr. Pettingale, HUDC surveyor, and the heads of both the local police and a school attended. The film "The Trail of the Litter Lout" was shown, and a sub-committee was formed to progress the campaign. The proposed closure of a public footpath running SE from St. George's School across its playing fields to Stewart Road was successfully objected to, supported by letters from 35 regular users. [Compiler's note: marked on OS maps of the time but since then a legal diversion along Carlton Road and behind the Maldon Ct. etc. along the SE boundary.]

The removal of the "Pellants" (^{though clocks etc earlier} radio/tv shop) clock as the only High Street timepiece was bemoaned [cf. the 2010 situation!] but had resulted in a promise of a clock on a Lower High Street shop [now, in 2010, W.H. Smith]. The Annual Outing on the 2nd July was to inspect two "outstanding examples of contemporary architecture" in Cambridge, Churchill College and the "Span" building. Mr. R.A. Finch, long-time Hon. Sec. early 1960s was mourned.

1967: It appears from subsequent documents and the Annual Report* that those at the 1967 AGM expressed considerable concern about the "rising tide of building development locally" and this in turn led to Mr. E.P. (Pat) Wilson, a local stalwart over many years, convening a meeting for July 1967 with the intention of setting up a "Development Subcommittee" of the Society. Around 20 individuals, many of them qualified in planning or architecture, were invited and although there is no immediate record of the outcome, it led to the extensive activity over the following years. The 1966 litter campaign continued over the following years.

FOOTNOTE: *Those Annual Reports and Newsletters which were found in our various searches are (except where ^{of} very local interest) collected in Docs.2. (also Docs 2a(1977) retained by the Society as fragile newspaper cuttings etc)

The campaign brought the Society both publicity and credit with it financing various litterbins, fostering the schools competition and contributing to the pictorial exhibition in the Library; and the local press congratulated the Society on the part it had played in the St. George's School footpath enquiry noted above. The Annual Outing on 24 June was to Hughenden Manor and two new residential developments at Seeleys near Beaconsfield with guidance by their architects, the same as used for the "Southdown Road scheme" (?Heath Farm/Queens Road). A membership drive by the selective distribution by members of the Society's leaflet had helped boost membership to over 360. The Autumn meeting on 21/11 was addressed by the Deputy County Planning Officer on the planning situation in Harpenden and again a short film, "Dunstable from Roman Times to 2000" was shown with Wine and Cheese refreshments. The indomitable Captain Bond, a founder member of the Society and its original Secretary and then the Chairman of the HUDC Plans Committee decided he must resign his Presidency after 37 years service in various guises and was replaced by Judge Ronald Dow a resident of 25 years standing.

1968: There was a summer outing to Osterley Park, an Autumn meeting with an illustrated lecture of Old Harpenden, and intensive discussions between the HUDG (see below), the Society, officials from the local Council and the County Planning Officer concerning changes to Harpenden town centre; similarly HUDG arranged, in conjunction with the Society's Further Education sub-committee, a series of lectures on "The planned environment" – said to be "well attended and greatly enjoyed". The local press were thanked for making public the details on how anyone who possessed rights to Common Land could register their claim (before May 1968).

1969: The AGM in April was followed by a talk on building design and materials, relevant to the ongoing discussions on town centre development proposals (request that the plans be displayed at the Library as well as during Council working hours). The Summer Outing was to Ascott House, near Leighton Buzzard, and there was an Autumn meeting on 13/11 with a talk by a representative from the Water Pollution Research Lab. at Stevenage concerning the then rather topical issue of water pollution of the environment [Compiler's comment – as demonstrated by the earlier foam pollution on the nearby Lea]. The final, 3/12/69 meeting, was devoted to a review of the Society's activities by the leaders of the various HUDC committees (unspecified) with full details advertised in the Press. During the year there was much talk about indiscriminate parking, traffic problems and the activities of the Urban Design Group – which is mentioned in more detail below.

1968 – 1970: The Society, taking its cue from a 1967 White Paper dealing with a review of the then planning legislation, generated a major policy document in January 1968 addressed to its committee members and entitled "The Development of Harpenden" (Doc. 3a). It noted that the Society had formed a Development Sub-committee to look into the way that Harpenden had seemingly developed rapidly and in an uncoordinated manner in the post-war years and used as its guidance a TCPA pamphlet entitled "The Citizen's Guide to Town and Country Planning". It also noted that this was not a problem restricted to Harpenden but that the heritage character of various similar towns had been best protected where the Local Authority concerned, with the support of expert advice and public opinion, had managed to exert some degree of control.

In Harpenden itself there had been a 1951 Development Plan (Annex A) but that was restricted simply to zoning certain areas for open space, residential,

commercial/industrial use etc. But as the White Paper had noted, it is also important that "the physical environment as a whole is properly shaped" and it seemed to the Society that many new buildings and some of the estates had been ruthlessly forced onto Harpenden without due consideration simply under commercial pressures. E.g. it noted how the original mansions of Milton Road were being replaced in what seemed to be a haphazard manner and there were fears that similar "destruction" could occur elsewhere.

The Society therefore pressed the then Harpenden Urban District Council either to appoint a specialised Planning Officer or alternatively make more use of the County's Planning Department as advisers; or better, to recruit a group from the many local qualified architects/planners to advise the HUDC as voluntary unpaid consultants so as to give more professional authority when facing up to developers as to the design, materials used etc. of new developments. This would help ensure the "guardianship of Harpenden's own special areas" rather as had been done in Norwich and other cities (refs. given in Doc. 3a). The policy document ended by suggesting that the Society should urge the HUDC to benefit from the expertise within the membership by inviting their input in the local planning process rather as the Civic Trust, of which the Society was a long standing member, had observed occurring elsewhere in the country. In Harpenden's case, the Society's 1967 "Make Harpenden Tidy" campaign could be seen as a more modest precedent.

The above resulted in the formation in April 1968 of the "HARPENDEN URBAN DESIGN GROUP", HUDG (Docs.3b,c) being a "consultative" group of planning/architectural experts drawn from within the Society's membership who would seek to advise the HUDC on planning matters on behalf of the Society. This arrangement was formalised in the Spring of 1968 (Docs.3b) e.g. "April 1968" memo that the Council had "welcomed the setting up of a joint committee of members of the (apparently separate) Harpenden Urban Design Group and the Harpenden Society", aims and method of working summarised in the 2/5/68 meeting report (Doc.3b); subsequent aims included appraising the then redevelopment of Carlton Road and Southdown: and, according to the 31/5/68 meeting, the Sainsbury development. Overall the intention was that the HUDG would provide a framework for the Council to ASSESS PLANNING APPLICATIONS in advance. There were further meetings 3/10/68 (Docs.3c) and 17/10/68, including a proposal to set up a Harpenden Conservation Area, a "draft of which had been agreed at County level", and 15/1/70 (parking round the Common [hopefully not by the ex-Silver Cup pond], the problems of the High Street/Station Road junction, and the undesirable impact on amenity of the proposed "solutions", the proposed bus shelter on the east side of the High Street, and comments on the likely future of the Harpenden East Station land). The HUDG remained active until August 1972 (q.v.), but meanwhile September 1970, a committee discussion regarding the various sub-committees which had been set up to look at specific issues from e.g. the Common, Rothamsted Park etc. along with existing local groups and the possibilities of co-operation (Doc. 3f); and on 24/9/70, to commemorate European Conservation Year, the Society arranged a public meeting on "Our Living Space" and there had been a Summer Outing to the ancient village of Hunsdon.

1971: It appears that it was in this year that the Upper Lea Valley Group, ULVG, was set up: thus Doc.3, first item p.2, noted that the Society and the Urban Design Group (see above) prepared a joint report in 1971 entitled "The Lea Valley in Harpenden" (Docs. 3d,e) which led to a public meeting where the ULVG was formally set up – and which then functioned "as a virtually autonomous body with the support of the

Society". Further info in Doc.3(d) where the HCC's 1970 "Countryside Plan" described the Lea Valley between Wheathampstead and Harpenden as an "area of great landscape value" – restated in "Hertfordshire 1981" – but there was local concern, as indicated above, that the trees and meadows were being allowed to deteriorate and new buildings inserted in an unplanned manner. The eventual aim was for a THROUGH WALK along the old railway track to Leaseybridge Lane, including a riverside walk through Batford.

1971-72: saw the appearance of at least two (only two found) major reports on the Lea Valley area of Harpenden written jointly by the Society and Harpenden Urban Design Group, HUDG; the first was dated January 1971 and referred to under 1971 above; a copy of the text pages of the second report, entitled the ULVG's 2nd Interim Report, "Central Area Study", and dated March 1972 is included in Docs. 3(e), the top copy, including various maps and diagrams, having been passed to the current management of the ULVG for their records. Between them, these two reports imply a truly massive amount of work by the Society and the HUDG at that time and helped transform what was plainly in many parts a semi-derelict industrial area into what it now is – including the forging of the now very popular Lea Valley Footpath from north to south through the Batford area of Harpenden (partly along the then recently closed, but fortunately bought by HUDC, British Rail Eastern Region railway line).

An illustration of the changes wrought by the volunteers of the ULVG and others subsequently is easily obtained in comparing the situation then, as in the reports, and now. Thus there is talk then of extensive nettle beds (encouraged by dumping of nitrate-rich river dredgings on the banks), the possibility of making a strip of marshland between the river and the Lower Luton Road to the north of Westfield Road bridge made into a nature reserve. Meanwhile, the watercress beds between Pickford Bridge and Batford Mill have, in contrast, been made into such a reserve having been viable until at least 1951 with five boreholes up to 120 ft. deep and electric pumps capable of raising 45,000 gals/hr. at a constant 52°F.

On similar lines there was talk of the meadow (the "chalk field") between Marquis Lane and the river – "a potentially fine area, owner not ascertained, mainly of dock and thistle" which "cries out for treatment" such as "the addition of topsoil which may allow suitable grazing then for horses" (interestingly this same land is again under discussion in 2010!). There was also, sadly, much talk of litter blowing into the river from surrounding industrial sites and Lower Luton Road, and description in the first report of strips of land such as "Area F" between that road and the river at the Coldharbour end of the site as consisting of a "cattle shed and the site of a company used for storage and burning factory waste, with dead trees etc.!"

On the positive side extensive botanical surveys of the site in general and of the disused railway track, are included and at least some of the area has since been taken for housing at e.g. Riverbanks Close and Lea Walk. The two reports (and possibly others not available to the writer) triggered many worthy improvements to the area by the ULVG, particularly the forging of the through walkway, conversion of the old watercress bed to a fully fledged nature reserve, various works to improve the river flow in that area, details of which appear in this Commentary for later years. A reference to the 1951 Town Map noted that the river had not yet been bridged at the lower end of Westfield Road and remained a ford adjoining the Red Cow public house rather as by the Marquis of Granby towards the other end of the site. (A plan

to extend the lower end of Station Road directly across to the Lower Luton Road across what eventually became the Marquis Lane playing fields and the Nature Reserve happily was dropped!). The report also noted that the enigmatically named "Castle Farm" towards Leaseybridge was originally named Causewell Farm.

Finally a note in the Treasurer's ledger for January 1972 showed that the Society booked a place for the Harpenden Spotlight on Leisure annual Exhibition (of which more later) and in September ran a press advert for a particular meeting, for an unspecified reason, with posters printed by the then National Children's Home (NCH) Print Unit on Street Improvement and Appearance (outcome unknown). Also in 1972, the still active HUDG appeared at a Public Enquiry on 26/7 into the extensive re-development activity proposed for the Roundwood Park area which obviously gave great concern with a Mr. Alan Squires OBE, ARICS representing the Society: outcome unknown (Doc. 3g).

1973; The first appearance in the ledger of reference to an Annual Dinner on April 4th for, from the ledger entries, approaching 100 guests – an event which continued until 1977 (q.v.). Meanwhile (1972/3) the Society was earning a steady income from sale of the Upper Lea Valley Report mentioned above, which arose from ^{the} joint venture with the ULVG and the Harpenden Urban Design Group (c.f. 1971-72). 1973 also saw the "Harpenden Town Centre Study" asking for views on traffic, parking, pedestrian facilities etc. (Doc. 3h: outcome unknown)

1974; Again an Annual Dinner in April and although no details apparent, the catering bill was, then, £219.60p suggesting again a similar number as in 1973 attended with, by implication, a small profit to Society funds. There were outgoings for ULVG's insurance premium (first appeared in 1973 with Municipal Mutual Insurance), for "opening of the Lea Valley Walk", for several trees (for planting in the Batford area?), for posters, presumably advertising same and for the rebuilding of the river weir – along with various sundry expenses for the then very active EP (Pat Wilson). All made for a very productive time for the ULVG, including various income entries ascribed to SADC presumably due to work done by the ULVG on SADC's behalf.

1975; The Society was very lucky to have a very precise Treasurer in the form of John Borthwick during this era allowing one to glean much from his ledger entries – of which I have only extracted the more obvious. Again an Annual Dinner in April with by implication a similar number of attendees, and with expenditure on flowers, posters, display boards ? and with the tickets printed by the NCH. Continuing production of the Newsletter printed by Bellant Secretarial and now with payment of ULVG's Rates to SADC, presumably for their new?, acquisition of a HQ nearby, and a new subscription to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (in addition to the usual such to HMWT, the Commons Preservation Society, the Hertfordshire Society, etc.). Again exhibited at the Spotlight on Leisure. A summary income/expenditure sheet inserted for the first time in the ledger.

1976; After a gap of around 5 years of no Newsletters found in the records available to the Compiler, three such were found for 1976 (and subsequently apparently four p.a., rather than the one "Autumn" Newsletter p.a. in the 1960s.) Usual subs to HMWT, Herts. Society etc. (plus a donation to the 50th anniversary appeal of CPRE itself). Also the Annual Dinner, with Lord Hill, the guest of honour, "in cracking form reminiscing about Harpenden as he first knew it", including wine and entertainment from the Abbey Theatre entertainment group (125 members at £2.25 each) and on this occasion I have attached the details as they are more extensive than for other such dinners – as Docs 4; &, as usual, have retained the Treasurer's

analysis of income and expenditure for the year in the aforementioned red ledger . The Society had a stand at the March Spotlight on Leisure Exhibition emphasising the work the Society had been doing to suggest improvements to the Southdown shopping area, ideas which received "wide support". Several new members were enrolled, adding to the 120 who had joined over the past year (?) perhaps as a result of the then active development plans both in Harpenden itself and in the Lea Valley. The AGM on 16/3 involved a lively discussion on such developments and local traffic problems and later that month Society volunteers planted 12 trees in Stewart Road to replace the elms that had died from Dutch Elm Disease the previous summer. Interestingly the ULVG organised a series of FAMILY WALKS on Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons throughout the summer led by Lorna Wang and Margaret Allen and a visit 23/6 to the HMWT Lemsford Springs Reserve. The meetings in May consisted of a film contribution from the ULVG, showing the work they had done in the Lea Valley, and from the St. Albans Civic Society and in September a talk on the "Erosion of Townscape". Meanwhile the ULVG's massive effort in clearing, and eventually providing, walking routes along the Lea was publicised through a photographic competition; and there were warnings that the exceptionally dry summer was having a bad effect on recently planted saplings and on roadside verges with a plea to residents to water them as appropriate. 1976 also saw the appearance of a slightly upgraded pre-Christmas regular meeting with punch being provided for the attendees followed by a light-hearted Brains Trust..

1977: The usual presence at the Spotlight on Leisure exhibition, with new photographs being provided for the display which elicited a great deal of interest both there and subsequently in the Library because of the out-of-the-blue Hyde threat (noted below) and unsurprisingly triggered a major increase in membership both at the Exhibition and during the year (140 by early May). The May Newsletter also noted the planting of a beech opposite the Rothamsted Park entrance to "complete the row ... which will hopefully take over one day in place of the sorely missed elms", and had attached to it a ULVG "News Supplement dated May 1977 for further details of their activities" and included a full list of the officers of the Society – and they too appalled by the prospect of the Hyde development in an area that the County Structure Plan defines as of "Best Landscape Quality". The usual annual subscriptions to HMWT, the Herts. Society etc. (but, for the first time?, also to the Civic Trust's Newsletter). As usual the summary income/expenditure for the year has been retained in the ledger. Again the main annual event was the Annual Dinner on 6/4/77 with 94 diners at £4 each in the Public Hall as before with the same caterers, sherry and wine, a raffle and an entertainment (a singer/cabaret) – details attached as Docs 5. This seemed to be the last such formal Annual Dinner, possibly due to a small drop in numbers [but even then 94 diners, probably more than we would get now] and a resulting slight loss to the Society; seemed to have been replaced in 1978 (which see) by a Wine and Cheese party, but again of fairly extensive proportions. The regular ULVG working parties were noted in the January Newsletter and volunteers requested; a similar project to prune back encroaching scrub and burn on site [Compiler's comment: how very sensible! – why waste time and energy bagging it for someone else to deal with at the local tip!] on the horse ride leading to the top of Queens Road; there was a campaign against the increasing number of unsightly posters in shop windows in the High Street conservation area. The Society commemorated the Queen's Jubilee year by various tree-planting (as detailed in the ULVG November 1977 News Supplement), litter-picking and general tidying schemes, particularly on the Common where committee member Douglas Weston had been appointed "Official Warden".

Meanwhile there was a repeat visit to the Lemsford Reserve and meetings on 2/2, a talk "The Landscape Landslide" by Christopher Hall, well-known Director of CPRE, at the AGM on 7/3 a talk from a representative of the Ramblers Association, on 10/5, where the Civic Trust (the parent body of organisations such as ours) presented their film "New Face for Britain", on 26/9 an Open Meeting to discuss the "many matters of great local interest" (the Hyde project, the future of Harpenden Hall etc.) and at which it was announced that the Society "NOW HAS OVER 1,000 MEMBERS" showing the "strong interest in preserving our local amenities ... and influence on local decision-making" – but bemoaning the relatively small number of active members. ['Twas ever thus!]. And finally on 12/12 the usual pre-Christmas (hot punch and mince pies) meeting, this time on "Operation Neptune – the next 100 miles". The Annual Outing, after a gap of several years, had been to Anglesey Abbey near Cambridge on 10/7, a NT property of ca. 1600 and extensive gardens.

1977 saw a major threat to the northern fringe of Harpenden in the form of a proposal by Beds. CC in their Structure Plan to build a new town of 20,000 inhabitants for the benefit of Luton, a "Luton overspill" in effect, on prime agricultural land at East Hyde which was then, and [2010] still is, an essential green wedge between Luton and Harpenden. The site was barely one mile from the northern outskirts of Harpenden and the Society set up the "HYDE CAMPAIGN" to publicise the threat in the form of a Public Meeting set up by the Society late 1977 (probably that on 26/9 noted above). The Society, as the only specifically Harpenden body, was subsequently represented at the public enquiry at some cost to the funds (£157 including the expenses of Roger Evans, Solicitors of Cardiff Road, Luton and Ian Glidewell who represented the Society) on November 29/30 at the Strathmore Hotel, Luton, and to whose hiring of the room the Society also contributed, and which happily rejected the proposal (as gleaned from the Charity Commission correspondence noted in 1979 and the December 1977/January 1980 Newsletters): details in a bundle of documents headed Docs. 2a – including the local paper's 18/2/77. ("price 6d"!, announcement of "A Huge New Estate which could house 20,000 people" along with plans and objections listed and with a suggestion in a 3/3/77 SADC letter that part of the reason for the big housing expansion was to cater for the expected increased housing needed should the Airport undergo major expansion. [Compiler's comment: had both developments gone forward unchallenged, that would surely have signalled the demise of Harpenden as a civilised place to live!]) (Ré Docs. 2a, see footnote p.4)

1977 saw the inauguration of the Society's AWARD SCHEME, to be on an annual basis and partly to emphasise the positive aspect of its work, such as the preservation of worthwhile old buildings, and defuse the inevitable tendency of such groups to acquire a negative image.

1978: Usual subs to HMWT etc. and appearance at the Spotlight on Leisure exhibition. As indicated above, the previous "Annual Dinner" replaced by a Wine and Cheese party on a similar date in the large hall at the Public Halls on 5/4/78 at which 42 members attended at £5 each and which gave an overall surplus for the Society's funds. Talk by Joan Thurston on plants of the Common (eventual booklet, 1987). Members tried out the newly-opened (following ULVG's intensive work) "through walk" to Leasey Bridge 9/7, back via Mackerye End. Also a day visit to Cambridge by coach (cost £48 Tate of Markyate) on 8/10/78 and a pre-Christmas mince pies and punch party. Tickets for the latter and also membership forms printed by a unit based at the Harpenden Further Education Centre, HFEC (as frequently during this era) and the Newsletters by Bellents of Arden Grove. Also the first

appearance of a cast aluminium plaque, a foot diameter and in the now familiar cream lettering on a brown bronze background, to celebrate particular improvements etc. to local buildings (Doc 6, February 1978 presumably for presentation at the March 13th AGM). Trees purchased (£72) but whether for screening the garage alongside the ULVG's meadow or part of the High Street programme, as below, unclear. The Trees Group co-operating with SADC and the Town Council on an autumn tree-planting programme; the former attempting to preserve the diseased elm "outside Woolworth's" [replacement tree subsequently provided by the Society in 1980, with plaque and surrounding seat]. Appeal for more (especially "active") members by Chairman Paul Usher, 11/78 and 1/79 Newsletters. Talk 21/11/78 on the threat of expansion at Luton Airport (then, only!, 1.9 m passengers p.a.) by D. Samson of LADACAN "with whose policy we are in strong agreement" (8/78 Newsletter)

Note on financial matters during the late 1970s

Until 1976, the Treasurer's ledger also included the income and expenditure of the ULVG and indeed even in the 1978 listing there was one expenditure for a "dumper truck" for that group. But it was plainly becoming increasingly active, something to be encouraged as being at least loosely associated with the Society but with its activities having a more obvious direct impact on parts of Harpenden, particularly in the Batford area – what has since become a Local Nature Reserve. In addition its members published a pamphlet, "Through Walk Guide", sold at some profit to the group, there was increasing need to have insurance for their work activities, they joined the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and in the recent past been repairing the weir on the river, carrying out extensive bricklaying jobs, etc. (cost of materials recovered from SADC Parks Dept.) – to the extent that their Treasurer had suggested (April 1976) to the Society's own Treasurer, John Borthwick, that "following our recent discussion it has been decided by ULVG's members that we should now attend to our own financesso could you please let me have a cheque for the balance of our account with the Society". But this was followed 3 years later by a handwritten note 14/2/79 noting the decision to wind up the ULVG individual bank account and transfer the assets and responsibilities back to the Society (sent 18/4/79, received 27/4/79). Summary accounts for subsequent years have been retained in the ledger and/or copied to the current ULVG membership Secretary (including its Jan. 1979 membership list). Also around this time there were notes from HMWT and the Civic Trust noting that following the recent years of very high inflation their subscriptions etc. would need to be increased.

1979: An important year for the Society in that AN APPLICATION WAS MADE FOR CHARITY STATUS as outlined below. Otherwise the routine of attendance at the Spotlight on Leisure exhibition continued and interestingly we applied for Grant Aid from SADC's Financial Services department to purchase new display units for such exhibitions (and paid around half the total). The Society's attempt to register as a Charity had started in 1975 but came to a head in 1978/79, partly at least driven by a desire to avoid paying Corporation Tax on its bank deposit account. We used as our Constitution (c.f. Doc. 3) a brief 3-point series of aims adopted 11/3/75 but we were warned to "avoid overt pressure group activities" as being incompatible with a Charity and to ensure that the income from the Annual Dinners at that time fully covered their costs – leading to extensive correspondence with the local Tax office by the Society's unfortunate (!) Treasurer; summarised in his letter 12/2/79 which sought to elaborate on the Society's activities – all of which eventually allowed the Society to be registered as a Charity, 16/8/79 as No. 278154R (Doc. 7).

Society 1978 Award, for the restoration of Rothamsted Manor clock tower, awarded at the Annual Spring Cheese and Wine Party held (2nd May) in the large Public Hall, hire charge £18, and a large gathering (based on receipts approaching £200). Tickets for that event printed at the NCH by Highfield Printers but membership cards and Newsletters still by HFEC – all local. Five hornbeam trees and a further eight unspecified saplings, an oak and a chestnut bought at a total cost of £47 (!) along with six unidentified trees from SADC; variously for the “Society Tree Group” in 1978 and (ULVG note 30/5/79) for a plantation screening the garage then adjoining the Batford Nature Reserve meadow.

The ULVG was also involved with expenses re construction work at the Batford Reserve, weir, etc. around that time, and dealing with various grants etc. from SADC, Harpenden Town Council, etc. so was “very grateful” (!) to be able to transfer its account to the Society itself, mainly from a deposit account of £90.12 (as mentioned above). The ULVG also contributed a guide to the River Lea from Leagrave to Ware, published by the Lea Valley Liaison Group and had outgoings for their dumper truck’s licence and insurance. In April the Society itself had 8,800 leaflets distributed to, presumably, all local households, topic unknown and possibly telling of the victory over the East Hyde Campaign Public Enquiry of late 1977 (which see); and the Society committee was starting to use our Local History Society for its meetings (from July 1978), with the Society’s public meetings still being held in the Small Public Hall at £7.30 – Doc. 8. During this period much activity from the Society’s Treasurer, Norman Powlesland, Secretary Ted Ward, Membership Secretary Brenda Suitters (? Deserving of a long service award having spent the last 30 years, with a small gap, so doing!) and Pat (E.P.) Wilson for the ULVG. Society concerned about the unfinished Rovers’ Hut on the Common and graffiti on Carlton Road railway footbridge. The September Newsletter listed the Autumn meetings, complimented Manland (now Sir John Lawes) School on the “splendid murals” on the Station Road pedestrian underpass, and noted the start of the Southdown supermarket

1980: The Golden Jubilee Year! Some details in the two 1980 Newsletters already noted (Doc. 2) and within that era, committee meeting Agenda/Minutes (separate bundle, labelled Doc. 17) covering most of the years from 1980 (the first such that I could find) to 1985 including, in the 20/3/80 committee meeting, a list of members’ names. The Society then had seven sub-groups reporting to the main (“Executive”) committee being the Commons, Trees, Plans, Transport, ULVG, Schools Liaison and Re-cycling Groups, and interestingly in those days there was much talk about pressure on SADC to install bottle banks with re-cycling – pressure which did eventually lead to a result! The talk on 22/4/80 was on the local rail electrification plans (until then rather ancient diesel multiple units were used on the commuter run to St. Pancras) and the proposed new station which, irritatingly to me, included the removal of the original and very useful, in wet weather!, canopies; and there was a note dated 15/4/80 expressing concern that the demise of the International supermarket might result in conversion to a Wimpy Bar, the tendency towards intrusive fascia boards and the proposed demolition of a listed barn at Plovers Cottage in Hatching Green. The annual Cheese and Wine party held in the large Public Hall (hire charge £16, including amplifier, spotlights, etc.) and sale of tickets yielded £187.50.

One of the main features in 1980 was the continuation from 1979, which see, of a project on local trees and in 1980 itself in particular a Tree Appeal where there was a

street collection and donations to fund the replacement of the by then dead elm, one of several in the High Street suffering from Dutch Elm Disease at that time, on the concourse which still commemorates our name on the circular seat surrounding.

Some miscellaneous 1980 snippets:

Further items and events from the Jubilee Year include – that we paid a local printer, Codicote Press, for printing 500 ULVG leaflets (presumably similar to those currently available), we had a separate Minutes Secretary who made “Xerox copies of the minutes etc.” and claimed expenses and a (fastidious?) committee member who submitted his own phone bill with an estimate of the exact percentage on Society business (please not in future!). We paid a fee to the Harpenden Spotlight on Leisure Exhibition for a “double stand space with power supply” of £14.50 (as previously such but a little unfair?). Fee for printing 150 small posters for the ULVG annual public meeting (mentioned for historical interest), and £20 to the HTC for a small advt in the Forum: next to similarly for the local Building Society offering an after-tax interest rate of 11.00%, emphasising the then high inflation rate, Doc. 9, which included items on the Common and the new Southdown Mini-roundabout. A bill for a 12” cast-aluminium Society plaque £37.66 from the Royal Label Factory at Stratford on Avon.

There were also various bills for printing membership cards etc. from the Schools Resources Unit of Victoria Road as previously, by then the bill for hiring the Small Public Hall plus kitchen was £13.45; a bill for the ULVG Dumper Truck annual licence of £10.50, diesel for the dumper and a series of tools for the ULVG the cost of which was recovered from the SADC whereas the cost of four concrete stands for benches installed by the ULVG were recovered from the HTC; and a claim from Lorna Wang for a sharing of the cost with the Leaside Residents Association for six leylandii and from James Smith of Matlock seven trees including beech, oak and plane, for £32.77, for planting during winter 1979/80, ? partly covered by the Society’s Tree Appeal which yielded circa £600 during the early part of 1980.. Meanwhile the Society had donated £25 to the St. Nicholas Church rebuilding appeal and contributed £23 to Eric Meadows, Photographer, for his photographs used in the Spotlight on Leisure Exhibition in the local library.

The AGM was held 11/3/80 in the Small Public Hall (Doc.10). There was unspecified ULVG income of £25.05 on 8/7/80 and a substantial donation to the Tree Appeal from the Blue Arrow (Travel Agents) group £250, and a refund from the SADC to the cost ^{of} materials etc. incurred by the ULVG on 16/5/80 of £65.32. During this time further donations to the Tree Appeal and also a minor flood of annual subscriptions, presumably following a reminder from the Secretary! We earned various sums from the sale of the ULVG Guide to the Lea Valley Area, e.g. £24 14/3/80 and just previously substantial amounts (over £480) paying in, as was done then, the individual subscriptions on a Bank Deposit book rather than via Standing Orders as was introduced soon afterwards, which must have been a nightmare – truly endless green counterfoil stubs. The combined Society and ULVG (which had some “income” due to individual subscriptions? and/or sale of the Lea Valley Guide?) accounts inserted in the red Ledger.

1981: Many subscriptions still being paid in individually as Bankers Orders and of the various shredded invoices one was for the purchase by the ULVG of 50 Acer Campestre, 10 Alder, 5 Scots Pine etc. from James Smith of Matlock at a total cost of £51 and three stainless steel plaques, at £37.38, from a local company “for High

Street trees" (for possible location see Doc. 11, the ongoing Golden Jubilee Tree Appeal). We contributed £1,000 (!) to the £1,263 cost of the replacement trees for the Lower High Street (Doc. 12) consisting of three Norway Maples, a London Plane, Robinia and a Prunus Pissardii. We were still using the Small Public Hall plus kitchen at a meeting's rate of £13.45 from SADC and appearing at the Spotlight on Leisure annual exhibition with Eric Meadows taking many photos for the latter and for allied Society publicity. We were then members of the Herts. Fed. of Amenity Societies and remained so until at least 1987/8.

The annual Wine and Cheese Party was again held in the Large Public Hall with kitchen and piano (£32.92) on 6th May and the accounts have been retained for interest (Doc. 13) as they show the need to obtain a liquor licence via the Queen's Head Pub, as then was (now the Skew Bridge), to sell the wine as provided by local merchant Peter Dominic and according to the ledger accounts included flowers for the *entertainer*, so a fairly posh affair! Other activities included a visit to the Ashwell Field Studies Centre where we purchased unspecified aerial photos, perhaps for a planning challenge, and appeared at a Batford Mill Planning Appeal; and we purchased, for £30, two hanging baskets for the High Street (cf the recent, though temporary, discord on such contributions) and donated £25 to the NW Essex and E. Herts. Pres. Assoc. – which seems odd but possibly concerns expansion threats at Luton or Stansted and/or a friendly donation to those resisting Stansted's major expansion.

1982: Treasurer Ian McNicoll. As previously, endless A5 sheets noting receipt of Bankers Order/pay-in slips for subs., continuing into late summer (subs. expected annually from the joining date rather than on January 1st). Society's accounts for 1982 and ULVG for 6/81-7/82 inserted in red ledger. Still paid annual subs to HMWT, Herts. Society, the Commons Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Soc. and the Town and Country Planning Assoc. In addition, we gave HTC £100 for "A notice board for the Common" (committee minutes of 18/2/82); paid SADC £18 for the hire of the Small Public Hall for meetings, and still paid a subscription to the Commons Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society and also to the Town and Country Planning Association. Contribution of, this year, £50 for the use of the Local History Society's Centre (location unspecified); a £50 contribution to St. Nicholas Primary School Building Fund Appeal 19/10/82; an expenses claim in "copperplate" hand-writing from the ever-energetic Lorna Wang of those days concerning the operation of the Plans Group. What appears to be a major membership campaign July 82 (£60's worth of stamps purchased) and a Mrs. Withers made a small expense claim apparently to attend, representing the Society?, the "Queen's visit to St. Albans early May 1982" (no details); and still attending the Spotlight on Leisure Exhibition. The Harpenden Resources Unit still printing the Newsletter. Hire of Small Public Hall plus kitchen now £15.63 and we hired a film to project at the Spring AGM.

The main annual event was 5/5/82 being the annual Cheese and Wine Party in the main Public Hall (hire charge £49.90), obviously still popular with ticket sales of £188, a raffle and bar sales giving overall receipts of £234 with bread, salad and wine supplied by Ackroyds, Fells, and Peter Dominic, names now to conjure with!

Other activities were represented by the occasional income recorded from the sale of the Lea Valley Guide by the ULVG £8.35 on 3/8/82, and their very interesting project, organised by Pat Wilson, which involved acquiring three old BR seats and reconditioning them to be put up around the Batford area. New bolts and seat

brackets were required and interestingly the metalwork was done at the Batford Forge (W.H. Ward and Sons – Blacksmiths, Welders etc.). The first such seat was installed 12/5/82 fairly high up Pickford Hill apparently on the pavement at the junction with Noke Shot and said in a note 19/7/82 to be “well used and comfortable by general acclaim” and that the others would be put up in due course (but no indication of when or where).

1983: The combined Society and ULVG accounts have been inserted in the red ledger along with on this occasion a “Treasurer’s Report for 1983” (possibly as his report at the AGM) and a very brief summary of the ULVG finances dated 25/1/84. There was also the Income/Expenditure from running the pre-meeting tea and biscuits arrangement, a complication now avoided by those providing that service using an internal float to cover those miscellaneous and minor items. Interestingly a reminder was sent out late July re unpaid subscriptions covering “205”(!!) unpaid, included in the July Newsletter.

There were the usual contributions to the Local History Society for use of its rooms, for the purchase of a wreath for Judge Dow’s funeral 12/83 (long associated with the Society). The Small Hall now cost £18.83 to hire per meeting, a cheque for £15 to a speaker from the Civic Trust who gave a talk with slides at one of our public meetings; still a member of the Herts. Fed. of Amenity Societies. 2,000 A4 letterheads using the same Cross Keys etc. design as still familiar from Heathprint of St. Albans. Much photocopying was being done (presumably Minutes etc.) by what was then Madesco (since absorbed into Artscape). We received a weekly list of Planning Applications from SADC, costing then £8 (p.a.) and paid £52 for a aluminium 12” dia. Plaque as previously.

The annual Cheese and Wine Party was on 10/5/83 and involved the sale of 73 tickets at £2.25, the main Public Hall with “piano and stage lighting” in addition and just short of the break-even point (n.b. a steady drop in numbers 1980-83, 140 to 73). I put a copy in the ledger as an example of what was done during those years.

1984: As before the combined Society and ULVG accounts inserted in the red ledger (and, exceptionally, the background “Reconciliation of Income/Expenditure” calculation), along with our partial(bank’s standing order list) MEMBERSHIP LIST and COMMITTEE MEMBERS(^{Colin Curry} President, Keith Jennings, Chairman) list. We sent annual subs to various groups as previously and additionally became affiliated to the St. Albans Council for Voluntary Service £5 p.a. Again represented at the Spotlight on Leisure Exhibition which was noted as “a great success”. We were still members of the Open Spaces Society and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) on behalf of the ULVG, and the Newsletter still being printed by the Schools Resources Unit of Victoria Road and as an example Issue No. 4 with 800 one-side copies and 1,600 both sides (i.e. total of five sides per copy) cost £32.44. We also paid, for the first time as far as I can see, an annual insurance payment to cover the Society’s projector, screen and display boards and third party liability at meetings etc., totally £34. The Local History Society room still being used and paid for (£27.50 for an unspecified number of times used)

Other activities included: The annual Cheese and Wine Party, sadly the last such after several years due to a barely viable number of tickets having been sold over the last two years and with a small loss in 1984 ?inconsistent with our Charity status, was held in early May with 72 tickets at £2.50 sold, partly in advance through committee members but, surprisingly, over half “at the door”: details inserted in the red ledger

for interest and in case we revive the practice (n.b. looks like hard work!). The Church Green bus shelter reconditioned by us at a total cost of materials of £12.16 later reimbursed by the Town Council, and in connection with the 10 year plan we, plus the Local History Society, submitted a detailed schedule of buildings in central Harpenden. Still receiving SADC's weekly list of Planning applications (£8.50 p.a.) – Plans Group (Les Matthews, Lorna Wang, etc.) very active according to volume of notes, expenses claims etc. and individuals attending one-day conferences at WGC on planning issues and one similarly organised by CPRE. Other expenditure included a payment to HTC of £243 to cover "additional payments for inclusion in the March Forum Newsletter" (presumably for an advert for the Harpenden Society), a claim for 500 leaflets to be printed by Codicote Press Ltd. of Hitchin (£90) of the "Harpenden Upper Lea Valley Guide" (presumably for distribution to interested members of the public) and again for the work party individuals covered for public liability and personal accident through a BTCV scheme for £1.00; and 2 x an invoice from Baulk (now Pinewood) for Readymix cement for the erection of a bench in two lots at £22.77 each

1985: As before the income/expenditure for the Society and ULVG combined inserted in the red ledger along with a breakdown for ULVG which showed the main income being from SADC (grants for the work done, as in the late 1970s previously) and sale of the ULVG Guides and main expenditures for the dumper licence and insurance, BTCV insurance (down there as £13.54 – which seems more reasonable than the apparent £1 only from earlier years). And on this occasion also the "Reconciliation of Income/Expenditure" arithmetic and some details of the Events Secretary's expenditure (which included for a Liquor Licence for the March AGM as well as the pre-Christmas meeting; perhaps because it was sold??). Also the usual annual subs sent to the Herts. Society (now part of CPRE) and, as in 1984 but after some disquiet in the committee (is it worth it?), to the St. Albans CVS along with the usual annual fee for the use of the Local History Society Centre, and payments to Masdesco for printing membership cards, photocopying Plans Group papers etc. The usual invoices from the Royal Label Factory for the aluminium plaques (£220), for the hire of the Small Public Hall (now £22.67) and from the Harpenden Pensioners' Workshop (still exist?) at the Day Centre for producing two notice boards. Les Matthews and Steven Gaubert still both very active in the Plans Group. The Plans Group continued to receive the SADC weekly list of Planning Applications and one was annotated to the effect that enforcement action was being planned re the erection of unauthorised advertising as reported by the Society (an activity which continues to this day).

More substantial outgoings were for the work done in 1984 on the Bus Shelter – a substantial project requiring "timber, the hire (?) of a sanding machine and motor, sanding sheets etc. amounting to ca. £131" (subsequently refunded by HTC 29/3/86) from Charles Wilson and also materials from Websters of Brewery House, 29 High Street. We donated £300 to the Morecambe Memorial Trust being a one-off donation towards the major refurbishment of Harpenden Public Halls: appeal document inserted in red ledger (1985).

We also donated £300. payable to HTC as our contribution towards the restoration of the Town sign on the Common, handed over at a ceremony on site on Saturday 11/5/85 and provided a Society plaque for the then new Waitrose shop from the Royal Label Factory (see above).

1986: As before relevant accounts placed in red ledger, many subs received early January by Bankers Orders but also many others (following a reminder?!) not until

July-September.

Usual annual subs to HMWT, the Open Spaces Society, the Herts. Federation of Amenity Societies, the Hertfordshire Society (now part of CPRE), the Herts. Rights of Way Federation (£2 p.a.!), and the usual payment to the Local History Society for use of their Centre. Membership/fixture cards supplied by Madesco for £48 and two insurance premiums to Municipal Insurance Group, again as previously, firstly at £24 as third party liability and secondly for £10 to cover "the projector, screens, etc.," new screen purchased for £110 from WGC supplier: the one we currently use is provided by HTC and I am unaware of a Society projector screen. Other routine bills were for the plaque from the Royal Label Factory following the Station "refurbishment" (which however also involved removal of most or all of the canopies and the waiting room on the grounds of reducing maintenance costs!); and for the sale or return wine, "nibbles" and the inevitable Liquor Licence for £4 for the 5/3/86 AGM. Also two fairly substantial invoices from Eric Meadows for the various photographs to publicise the Society. SADC weekly list of Planning Applications, now £12 p.a. Insurance for the tools used by the ULVG volunteers quoted as £11.15 as being "very reasonable" from Municipal and some form of volunteers' insurance via BTCV; sadly some tools stolen from the ULVG HQ but difficult to say whether a claim was made.

1987: Routine accounts in the red ledger. A copy of the Committee Minutes of 11/5/87 have been attached as Doc. 14 as they included a list of the Plans Group's comments on the current planning applications (a useful idea for the future?) and also mentioned vandalism of our Station Road seat, illicit parking on the Common and other such familiar issues!

Very few Bankers Orders dockets this time – different system in use? (but see 1989!) Still running a deposit account at the bank yielding ca. £50 p.a. We were paying petrol plus expenses to speakers at our Public Meetings and occasionally giving a small donation to the organisation concerned (FoE, London Green Belt Council, whose reports we had just started subscribing to, etc.) Small Hall costing £24.74 per meeting; some truly fastidious expenses claims with lengthy lists of duration of phone calls at the various possible rates – not I think "required" by the then Treasurer and one must hope not so in future! Continued to take the Journal of the Civic Trust, Heritage Outlook, to contribute to the running costs of the Local History Society for the use of their room in Harpenden Hall (£35), pay various third party etc. insurance to the Municipal Insurance Group, pay for SADC's weekly list of Planning Applications, pay Herts. Soc. sub. (£5), and the Open Spaces Soc. (£15). HMWT (now up to £10 p.a. which includes their "Newsletter packages we send you").

Particular projects during 1987 included: providing the Memorial Bench Seats for a Dr. Moore and a Mrs. Labrun (presumably both local luminaries) at a total cost of £252 on behalf of the Town Council who subsequently sent us a thank you letter 18/2/87; contributing to the purchase of four litter bins for Southdown, going halves with the Town Council (no reflection on those involved then but it behoves one to examine such a product when delivered as there was something of an ongoing problem with the fastener on the canopy to each bin); and providing a bench at East Common with a stainless steel plaque in memory of H. Beatrice (installation etc. £47: no indication of cost of bench). Of long-term interest, especially to the volunteers of the ULVG, was the construction and erection by a local builder of a stone cairn with inserted waymark sign and a plaque dedicated to the work of the ULVG at Batford over the years with an on-site ceremony 30th of May 1987. "Photographs by Eric

Meadows" but no sign of the photos themselves; have retained the builder's drawings for interest, Doc. 15 .

Finally, but by no means least, the fruition of Joan Thurston's labours in the form of the "Plants on Harpenden Common" booklet presumably published earlier in 1987 but, due to its popularity (at the then 50p per copy), resulted in a series of the booklets being printed and meanwhile yielding a profit for the Society of ca. £60 and as the Treasurer in his 1988 AGM report (Doc. 16) noted, the booklet promoted a greater appreciation of the Common. Difficult to be sure of the total production, which seemed to be by photocopying the original, but I infer over 200 (at least four batches of 50 each due to an over-run in some of the printing work) of which a batch of 10 to St. Albans City Museum shop and complimentary copies to Rothamsted Library and the HTC Greens cttee but could find no specimen copy as such. (Exceptionally I have retained the handwritten paperwork as of some historic interest in the red ledger). Apparently there were plans for a similar booklet on Moths and Butterflies on the Common and also Mammals (but no evidence of either in the period to end 1989). ULVG activities – I infer routine apart from the cairn project mentioned above.

1988: The Society and ULVG accounts again put in red ledger along with a bank part – membership list . For Treasurer's report (on 1987) to the 1988 AGM, see above. We made the usual routine payments to SADC for the annual Planning Lists (that via Edmund Knight, who had just joined the Plans Group, in a characteristically very neat written note), £15; annual subs to HMWT, £10; the Hertfordshire Society, £5; for the first time to the Hertfordshire Groundwork Trust, £25. SADC were charging £28 for hire of the Small Public Hall; a slightly reduced sum to the Local History Society for use of their rooms for committee meetings which were then switched to the Day Centre (£4.75 per evening); a total of four payments to Municipal Mutual Insurance Ltd., broadly as before except with two additional premiums for unspecified reasons, totalling £98; a claim from Eric Meadows for various black and white photographs "for publicity display" – and again the meticulous listing of expenses by one committee member which contrasted to the far more sensible and pragmatic brief statement of total costs for e.g. copying and postage by another!

Only other obvious item is that we hired the Methodist Church Hall for a Public Meeting 18/5/88 (unspecified purpose but seems likely to be for the Spring Cheese and Wine party, but on a much lower scale than in previous years). However, at the Committee level, a Transport & Travel Group emerged, with Alan Sutton as main contributor, in response to the local traffic problems and a Committee member, Kenneth Kemsey-Bourne, provided photographs for the October Traffic Forum meeting and inclusion in our Newsletters around then.

1989: Ian McNicoll of 12 Tintern Close, Kinsbourne Green still the Treasurer and still running both current and deposit accounts (interest for year £57.30p) – as in a note at year's end written by Penny Alcock, possibly as she took over? The combined Society and ULVG accounts including a reconciliation calculation placed in the red ledger, the ULVG's including the usual expenditures on the dumper truck (e.g. replacement of tyre) and on taxing and insuring it, with income of £16 from the sale of the Guide mentioned before and reimbursements from SADC of around £241 presumably for work done (materials etc.) on the Batford Nature Reserve.

As in most previous years, the Treasurer's red ledger indicated the usual stream of subscriptions received early in the year but also through much of the year including up to a final bunch collected 7/12/89 at the pre-Christmas gathering (but possibly a characteristic of the system used whereby members subs became due on the anniversary of their joining – in contrast to the system now used where existing members subs are due Jan 1 but those joining June-August, i.e. before the winter talks season, being asked to pay for the whole year but provided with the previous Newsletters, and those joining September onwards being given a "free" period to the year's end).

Although there was no list of committee members, those claiming expenses included a Mr. Stephen Gaulbert, M.F. Vincent and Les Matthews of the Plans Group along with Edmund Knight as mentioned above. Others noted were S.R. Bush, who had been active for several years, and Isobel Leek who after some years of being Secretary was replaced by Brenda Suitters in March.

We paid the usual subs to the Herts. and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT), £10; the Herts. Society, £5; the Open Spaces Society £15; the London Green Belt Council, £7.50; the Herts. Groundwork Trust, £10.

We made a contribution to a donation on the retirement of Mr. Stan Keasley the local and well-known retiring road sweeper; payments to Eric Meadows, for more black and white photographs during the presentation of the Society's plaque and environmental certificates and for various publicity. We made two payments to Municipal Insurance Ltd., unspecified, but totalling £97; the usual cheque to SADC for the list of weekly Planning Applications; the Small Public Hall was costing £28 for our Public Meeting and the Day Centre still at £4.75 for the committee meetings. By now there was a "Southdown Group" concerned particularly with that area of Harpenden with its shopping parades, Green, church etc. – possibly triggered by the decision around then (?) to re-design the road layout such that all Walker's Road traffic was channelled around the frontage of the then Rose & Crown pub thereby severing the previous link alongside the south side of the Green. The usual pre-Christmas gathering was arranged in the form of a Punch evening (96 glasses borrowed but no other details).

The concern about the increasing level of local traffic which resulted in 1988's formation of a new Society Group, the Transport and Traffic Group, continued into 1989 with a February meeting about the alleged need for a Harpenden bypass following on from the September-October 1988 Traffic Survey, supporting photographs provided by Kenneth Kemsey-Bourne which resulted in a six-page report summarising the results and recommendations. Culminated in what appears to be a public "Bypass meeting" in March at which a retired Traffic Engineer, Mr. F.J. Cave, identified Harpenden's two distinct traffic problems as being (1) peak-period South-North tidal traffic, an appreciable proportion of which is through traffic and (2) non-peak access/parking for local business and shopping activities (though anecdotal evidence subsequently suggested that at all times of the day much of the High Street traffic was basically local which a, potentially destructive, bypass would not remove). Mr. Cave went on to say "the practical effect of modern traffic management as exemplified by the (disastrous!) St. Albans one-way system emphasises the need for us to call into question and prepare detailed criticism of the Study in the light of our local knowledge". Other transport issues were noted by Alan Sutton, 1988, in an article submitted for the 19/7/89 committee meeting concerning the proposed Pelican crossing in the High Street near the War Memorial,

now a standard pedestrian crossing, and included some rather grumpy comments about the failure of BR to make clear what restrictions were in place as regards various train tickets at various times and copied to the Harpenden rep of the Assoc. of Passenger Transport Users.

Finally, interesting to note that the ULVG purchased 3,000 A4 sheets, presumably for Newsletters etc., from a company known as Paperback Ltd. of East London whose speciality is to take recycled paper and convert it into a useable form – thereby closing the recycling loop.

This then completes the task of summarising the voluminous paperwork and information mentioned at the start of this Commentary and has attached to it the various Documents alluded to within the text, those being numbered from Doc. 1a through to Doc. 17, the last mentioned being an incomplete collection of committee Agendas and Minutes from 1980-1985 (the 11/5/87 Minutes, noted in the Commentary for 1987, being held separately as Doc. 14). These included additional information on the 1979/80 Tree Appeal, a major initiative of the Society at that time, and which is described under the year 1980 in the current Commentary. Should other Minutes from the period the Commentary covers come to light in time they will be incorporated before being sent to the County Archivist. *PS Indeed extensive (especially 1960s) material discovered Sept 2010 and now incorporated in this, revised Commentary*

John Davis, August 2010

John Davis

21 Dec 2010

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: This is to acknowledge the considerable patience and tenacity of Maureen Randell in the preparation of this document which hopefully will act as useful summary to the history of the Society in the 1961-1989 period.

The attached photocopy, of a very fragile and brown cutting from an (undated) edition of the local newspaper "The Herts. Advertiser and St. Albans Times"; had to the left of the diagram a column of text, somewhat damaged and difficult to read, under the heading "Another 2,000 Houses to Be Built" and which stated, under the subheading "DISTRICT ZONED AS RESIDENTIAL", as follows (as typed, so, e.g. "Grove-road"):

A 20-year development plan for Harpenden, prepared by Hertfordshire County Council as part of the expansion scheme for the County, envisages the building of another 2,000 houses, four new churches, sixty nine shops and three new schools.

The plan will be on exhibition at St. Albans Town Hall next Monday and five following days.

Harpenden Urban Council and the County Council have been in continual consultation making plans to keep the charm and character of the town – which has been zoned as residential – and at the same time to allow it to grow naturally.

About 5,500 more people are expected to make their homes in Harpenden but the County Council points out that it should be possible to keep what is best in Harpenden and at the same time make improvements where they are badly needed.

Of the 2,000 new houses to be built, 200 will be erected at Batford and on other sites between 1951 and 1953; 500 at Batford and other sites between 1953 and 1958; and 1,290 at West Common, Wood End Farm, The Grove and other sites between 1958 and 1973. [Compiler's comment: The first and last of these sites are what we would now call the Beesonend Lane development and the block of housing running south from Wheathampstead Lane along with the Long Butlers/Poynings Close development.]

Shops at Batford.

Twelve of the sixty nine proposed new shops will be built at Batford between 1953 and 1958 and the remainder in the town centre, North Harpenden and the Southdown-road area between 1958 and 1973. There are to be three new schools – Roundwood Park area, Primary (1953-1958); Roundwood Park, Secondary and Grove -road Primary (1958-1973).

In addition to general road improvements, a new bridge is to be constructed over the river Lea near Pickford Bridge to provide a second link between the town centre and Lower Luton-road [Compiler's comment: this would have taken Station Road down to the Lower Luton Road in a direct line slicing through what has since become a Local Nature Reserve reed bed and was subsequently abandoned as a proposal – partly following strong opposition from the Harpenden Society].

This, together with the improvement of Marquis-lane, Piggottshill-lane and Walkers-road, will form an outer ring road from Lower Luton-road to St. Albans-road and a link, by way of Redbourn-lane, with Watling-street [Compiler's comment: this part of the plan was also abandoned].

Bowers-way is also to be extended southwards to join Vaughan-road [Compiler's comment: this would be the short section to the south of the otherwise built up length of Bowers Way and exiting on Vaughan Road by the Police Station].

A new car park is to be provided on backland between Vaughan-road and Bowers-way with additional facilities in the town centre.

Of the four new churches, one will be at Batford and three in new residential areas. A new postal sorting office is to be erected off Vaughan-road and a new automatic telephone exchange in Amenbury-lane.

Provision is also made in the plan for a third cinema, at Batford near Pickford Bridge [Compiler's comment: as marked on the map and in addition to those then on Leyton Road, The Regent, where the shoe mender/dentist facilities are now; and one on the west side of Luton Road north of Townsend Lane, The Embassy].

NEW HOUSES:
1553 IN NEW RESIDENTIAL AREAS
437 IN ALLING
TOTAL 1990

To the County Archivist from John Davis, Harpenden Society. (copy for us)

An addendum to the Commentary and attached Documents lodged with you earlier this year, this being a series of photocopies (to preserve their integrity) of various press cuttings and originals of various Harpenden Society committee reports as discovered recently in a separate archive in the Society's keeping.

Much of this newly discovered documentation consists of the Society's comments on the early 1950s "Harpenden Development Plan" mentioned as Annex A in the earlier Commentary/attached documents which otherwise covered the 1961-89 period alone.

Some with Chair
Thus most of the newspaper cuttings from the early 1950s have extensive, and generally critical, comments by the Society of the above-mentioned Development Plan, with its potentially very damaging inner ring road and with the possibility of straightening the eastern end of Station Road to scythe across what are now the playing fields and local nature reserve down to the Lower Luton Road – along with extensive house building etc. Later in that decade there were comments on the very disappointing demolition of the iconic Church Green cottages (to be replaced by a line of shops with flats above) apparently around 1959/60 – as inferred from the comment in the 20/7/61 cutting referring to "the new shops" on that site – and on the replacement of the substantial houses in Arden Grove (previously used for e.g. dental surgeries) by the current office development, and general concern in 1959 that Harpenden was losing its character under the impact of new housing on its periphery, including part at least of the famous Cox's orange pippin orchards in Townsend Lane.

Of rather later vintage, a June 1967 cutting described a major anti-litter campaign sponsored by the Society with pictures of students from a local school displaying the results of their labours in the form of the collected litter – an initiative also briefly mentioned in the original Commentary under 1966 noting that the Society had sponsored the school's anti-litter project and competitions for best posters and essays.

The above-mentioned committee reports, mainly from the 60s/early 70s but also going back in one instance to the annual report for 1947, are attached, mainly in their original form for the County Archive itself but with, as usual, the Society retaining copies. Some of these reports, e.g. "the report of the general committee 1971/72" included much information not available at the time I compiled the original Commentary on the Society's activities.

(copy of 1947
A.R. attached)

At that time it appeared there were only two public meetings a year, one in the Spring which incorporated the AGM, and another in the Autumn; but there had been suggestions that there should be more and since there did appear to be interest, with attendances having increased from under 40 to over 100, the committee said it would look into that possibility for the future. Also noted that Mr. Brandreth, the Librarian, had agreed to PRODUCE A NEWSLETTER, the first of which was planned for mid-1972, and the report ended with thanks to the Council's officials especially to the Clerk and Engineer (Messrs. Best/Pettingale) for their readiness to listen to the Society's representations.

There were Annual Reports, some letters etc. for most of the 1950s, including the Society's formal criticisms of the above mentioned Development Plan in two submissions to the County Planning Dept. in February 1953. On a lighter note, the annual report for 1952 mentioned that membership was "now over 200" and that the Society had placed a copy of the local 2½" to the mile O.S. map, in the station booking hall and hopefully useful to visitors. The 1947 report started "After the break caused by the war, the Society resumed its activities on 10th November 1947 at a Special General Meeting where the name was changed from the original "Harpenden and District Preservation Society" to "The Harpenden Society" and the Constitution altered to include in the aims "the promotion of the general wellbeing of the people of Harpenden and its environment".

attached as "Page 2a"

The information in some of the 1960s reports will obviously duplicate much of what is said in the original Commentary but despite that are likely to contain additional snippets of information not then available and have therefore been included in this bundle of documents.

Finally there is a "flyer" advertising a public meeting of the Harpenden Society on Wednesday October 24 1973 (as usual at that time in the Small Public Hall) to discuss The Formation of the Harpenden Local History Society. This possibility had been mooted on one of the attached documents, thought to be from September 1970, which mentioned a WEA course on Local History then being taken by Professor Lionel Munby emphasising the importance of collecting historical items and documents together for posterity – the main speaker at the above-mentioned public meeting.

attached as "Page 2 b"

As to the size and structure of The Society's Committee around those times, the following is the list as at the 1969 AGM showing 20 members, those underlined in that list being those who had already served for three years and would be required to retire with the possibility of being re-elected if they so wished "after a lapse of at least one year". This and its size are in marked contrast to current practice.

John Davis December 2011

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1947.

After the break caused by the war the Society resumed its activities on 7th November 1946 with the bidding of a Special General Meeting at which the name of the Society was changed from the Harpenden and District Preservation Society to the Harpenden Society, and the constitution was altered to include in the aims "the promotion of the general well-being of the people of Harpenden and its environs".

Name change
Aims of the Society

A new committee was elected in which were included representatives of a number of other local societies. The committee has held twelve meetings with an average attendance of thirteen. A wide range of matters have been discussed and representations have been put forward regarding riding on the Common, the parking of cars on the Common, the use and lay-out of Rothamsted Park, advertisements on cinemas, the reversion of the small public hall to its proper purpose, the inconvenience of long cul-de-sacs and long parallel roads without lateral communication and the pollution of the River Lee.

A lecture was arranged on the Government's New Towns proposals and also a lecture on windmills, which was supported by an exhibition of photographs. The school children of Harpenden were invited to take part in a competition in which a number of questions about Harpenden had to be answered. Prizes were provided by the Society and entries were received from one hundred and fifty children.

Schools Quiz

The membership of the Society is now 164. Most of these members joined the Society before the war and it is now considered that endeavours should be made to increase the membership, particularly among those who have come to live in Harpenden since the outbreak of the war. To assist members to spread knowledge of the existence of the Society and its aims a few circulars are enclosed for them to distribute to those of their friends who may be prospective members.

but a big Committee!

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Tuesday 20th January 1948 in the Small Public Hall, Southdown Road, at 8.15 p.m.

1948

The rules of the Society have been under examination and as a result a proposal has been put forward that they should be amended to take the form set out on the enclosed paper. This proposal will be submitted to the Annual General Meeting.

Not found

The business of the meeting will also include the election of Officers and Committee. The following nominations have been received for election to the Committee:- Mrs. Crowther, Mr. E. Browning, Mr. S. V. Shadbolt, Col. G. B. M. Scutt, Mr. E. Flawn, Mr. A. Shoosmith, Mr. L. J. Searby, Dr. Walter Russell, Capt. K. H. Bond, Mr. G. H. Herring, Mr. A. H. J. Miller, Mr. N. A. C. Salvosen, Mr. R. Salaman and representatives of the National Council of Women, the British Legion, the Women's Institutes, the Workers' Educational Association, the Horticultural Society, the Rotary Club, the Youth Council and the Harpenden Branch of the British Drama League. Members are invited to make further nominations, but in each case it is important that the person nominated should have indicated his or her willingness to serve on the Committee if elected.

The financial statement for the period 1st June 1946 to 31st December 1947 will be submitted for adoption at the Annual General Meeting.

EUSTACE BROWNING.
Chairman.

Small membership (164) but potentially big club with reps. from other Groups

History - A timeline for Harpenden / the Society 1930-87

*1930 The Harpenden and District Preservation Society was formed in February 1930. Its aims, as set out in the Constitution, were: 'To safeguard the amenities of Harpenden and its environs, and to do everything possible to preserve and enhance its beauty for our own and future generations. With this purpose it will give special attention to zoning and open spaces, to roads, footpaths and rights of way, and to the prevention of disfigurement caused by ill-placed advertisements, by the unnecessary destruction of trees, and by smoke and other nuisances. The society will also devote special care to the preservation of buildings of architectural and historic value, to building development and to the melioration of such conditions as now tend to detract from the amenities of the locality'

*1932. Passing of the Town and Country Planning Act provided some protection for the centre of Harpenden.

*1933 November. A resolution to adopt a scheme embracing those parts of Harpenden excluded from the first Town Planning Scheme was passed by the Urban District Council - 'much to the satisfaction of the society'

*1933 the society undertook the planting of trees as an annual feature of its work. Permission was obtained for this to be done on Harpenden Common and on the 'roadside wastes' along Luton road. The first planting consisted of four trees in the Baa Lamb Trees group and five near the Railway Hotel (now the Harpenden Arms) on 16 February. The work of preparing the ground and the actual planting was carried out by Harpenden unemployed men, by arrangement with the Unemployed Centre.

*1937 2 March AGM of society. talk by the secretary of The Herts Society on a scheme for the supervision of building plans

*1937 5 June Sign unveiled by Lord Brocket on the site of Bennett's Butts, where compulsory archery was practised in the past

*1940 719 evacuee children in Harpenden. Village sign vandalised

*1946 November the society widened its aims and changed its name to the Harpenden Society at a revival meeting. Quote from 1947 Annual Report: 'After WW2 the society resumed its normal activities with a Special general Meeting at which the name of the society was changed...and the constitution was altered to include the aim 'the promotion of the general well-being of the people of Harpenden and its environs'

*1947 Harpenden Society Open Meeting (26 May) at Lourdes Hall Addressed by Mr FJ Osborn, chairman of the Town & County Planning Association on 'New Towns in an old County'

*1950 A meeting under the auspices of the Harpenden society was held in the Public hall. Inter alia one speaker said: 'Years ago Harpenden High Street had been described as the most beautiful High Street in England but such a description could not be applied to it now'.

Another speaker: 'This body is here for the creation of public opinion. It possesses no statutory powers but all great reformatations have been brought about by public opinion.'

Population in 1950 15,000

*1950 March Desputation from the society to the UDC on the Sun Lane widening scheme

*1961 Subscription (minimum) 2/6d (12.5 p) 200 members

*1970 population 21,000 plus the County Council intend to limit it to 26,000 'In resisting the spread of residential building into the surrounding countryside, they have the support of the Harpenden Society and of all residents who appreciate the character of the town and its

natural features'

(minimum annual subscription 5s (25p))

*1978 First mention I can find of the Harpenden Society award - plaque won by developers and architects responsible for 66/72 High Street, on wall of estate agents John D Wood *1979 January Newsletter 'The success and effectiveness of the society is completely dependent on the number of ACTIVE members....YOUR help is desperately needed'

*1980 Vain appeal against 'For sale' boards on private properties, initiated by Connells. Croudance development (???) Appeals against this sent to the Minister for the Environment under the names of the Harpenden Society and the East Common Residents' Association

*1982 Newsletter Society's action against British Rail proposal to demolish most of the old station building in station approach Applications pouring in to develop Anskombes, Harpenden Lodge, the old Nursery School site and Akrill House.

*1983 The society supported a 'Keep Harpenden tidy' campaign, in conjunction with the Councils.

A founder member of the society, Captain KH Bond MC "A watchdog with no teeth must seem to be a big dog and have a loud bark. It is members not money that we want'

Keith Jennings: harpenden herald, 17 Sept 1987 (chairman of the society)

"We have been active in harpenden for over 50 years. We have achieved a great deal and in that time we have sought to preserve what is good in Harpenden and encourage sensible development. As a society, with 1,200 members, we will continue to be active for at least another 50 years....because, and let there be no doubt, as far as development goes in Harpenden the battle is just beginning.' Newsletter October 1987

'How does a voluntary society, with no executive powers, further its aims of keeping Harpenden a good place in which to live? Firstly, by seeking to understand the issues thrust upon it (and on its elected representatives) by mounting population pressures in the South-East in general and Hertfordshire in particular.Harpenden's best defence is informed public opinion. We shall do our best, but we need your help. Our influence gains in strength with increased membership, so we need recruits.' Newsletter Jan 1989

The Harpenden Society

A Public Meeting to form a Harpenden Local History Society

8.15 pm Wed October 24 1973 Small Public Hall

Mr Lionel M Munby

Editor of "The Local Historian"

will speak on

THE PLACE OF A LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
IN A MODERN COMMUNITY

Exhibition

of old Harpenden pictures
and documents from the
County Record Office

Mr Anthony Palmer

Hon. Sec. Herts Local History Council

will give a brief description
of the documents

Doors open 7.30 pm

Coffee 7.45-8.15 pm

Page 2b

of Dec 2011

"Addendum"

appreciate our local history

The Harpenden & District Local History Society was founded in 1973 as an offshoot of the Harpenden Society. WEA (Worker's Education Association) classes on the history of both Wheathampstead and Harpenden, tutored by Lionel Munby brought together a group of interested people who produced six booklets on the history of the district and then formed the core of the new Society.

The aim of the Society is to encourage the study and appreciation of local history as well as general history. Monthly evening meetings take the form of talks, both of local and general historical interest.

The Society holds quarterly exhibitions (on the first Saturday of March, June, September and December) in Park Hall, Leyton Road, from 2.30 to 4.30pm, which are advertised in the quarterly newsletters and local press.

A variety of artefacts, documents and photographs of local interest are held by the Society, and can be consulted by arrangement with the curator, Les Casey (01582-742883). We are at the moment in the process of cataloguing these on computer which will make them easier to trace, we hope to put this information on a website in due course but there is much work to be done, so any offers of help would be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested please come along to one of our meetings or a Saturday exhibition, both are free but donations are appreciated.

"Page 2b", as mentioned in the 1967-
Addendum