

MARCH 1975

3p

Harlequin

Leisure Magazine of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Research Group and Associated Organisations



In this issue

HARWELL COMPUTERS — OXFORD AREA ARTS COUNCIL
MEMORIES OF A HARWELL CHERRY GROWER
ABINGDON COUNTY HALL — HARWELL ARTISTS



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"HARLEQUIN" is dependent upon its readers for most of the material published; its quality can only reflect the quality of the material submitted. Only through your support can it be developed to its full potential.

COVER PICTURE

DR. B.W. DALE OF NUCLEAR PHYSICS, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OXFORD AREA ARTS COUNCIL, CAPTURES SOME OF THE CHARM OF OLD COTTAGES AT EAST HAGBOURNE.

PICTURE: ATHAR CHAUDRY

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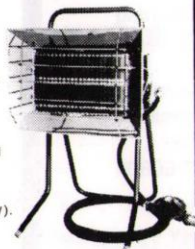
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J. E. BUTLAND,

A.C.I.I., M.Inst.P.S.

DIRECTORATE

When the Editor asked me to write an article on finance—possibly the second most popular subject for mankind—it seemed easy. Well, it might have been easier to write a number of articles, each dealing with a different subject, than to try to select one (for example shares, unit trusts, bonds, building societies, life assurance, national savings, mortgages). Having selected one aspect, should one assume that the reader knows nothing, a little or a lot? There is nothing worse than reading something that you do not understand, except possibly simply-stated truths which you have known for years. So the choice has to be made: old hat, new hat or no hat. Of course, in the interests of condensing the article, less common exceptions are ignored, which gives the experts the opportunity to point them out.

The foregoing is a normal plight of

financial commentators, but giving opinions on finance today is exceptionally hazardous. Recently one of our leading City Editors wrote extensively on the virtues of a company and the value of its shares: the following day everybody, including himself, knew that the company was in dire trouble. And I am required to write some four weeks ahead! Well, I shall give my personal views, some of which may appear, by the time you read them, as obvious wisdom, or irrelevant, or (but I trust not) stupid because of some cataclysmic event.

Now for some positive comment: I consider that the best investment is to own the house one lives in; and, better still, to own a second one PROVIDED it is possible to retain control of occupancy so as to permit sale when required. Legislation is growing which makes such control difficult, or even impossible, for

most persons; and taxation can be onerous to the extent of removing the running profit. If it is thought that this country's economy will be brought back into balance without totally mortgaging our future assets, such as North Sea oil, and that the pound will not depreciate too greatly, then almost any dependable share, purchased now, could show a substantial profit in a few years. What is a dependable share? In this context I define it as the share of a company which remains financially solvent until recovery is reached and trade is booming again. But even a soundly-run business can be felled by "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune". So, after all, the choice is neither easy nor certain.

With inflation making nonsense of carefully calculated figures, we may be faced with the aim, not of making a good profit, but of minimising loss in real terms of purchasing value. While this may be less enchanting, it is just as necessary to review our investing as in palmier days, but investment decisions are likely to be different.

To round off these jottings: if any reader writes to the Editor stating an aspect he would like covered by an article, I shall try to oblige in the future. (Any question seeking a personal answer only, and not for publication, should be in an envelope marked 'Personal'.)

BOOKS IN BUCKS AND BERKS

By permission of "Buckinghamshire and Berkshire Countryside"

Thames Valley churches

BY BRIAN BRACHER SRC

FOLLOWING his book "Chiltern Churches" (first written as a thesis), Graham Martin has now published *Historic Churches of the Thames Valley* (Spurbrooks Ltd., Station Road, Bourne End, Bucks; price £3). This book contains a detailed index as well as an extensive bibliography, has over 150 illustrations and deals, in successive chapters, with the churches between Staines and Oxford.

The first two chapters cover church history and buildings, revealing that the author is not just interested in architecture, but is no mean historian. Starting with Roman times, when there were few Christians in this country, he goes on to describe the constant conflicts between Wessex and Mercia in the 7th century. The spread of Christianity is outlined, together with the effects of Danish invasions.

The chapter on church buildings starts around Norman times. It is interesting to learn that Edward the Confessor had com-

pleted the building of Westminster Abbey by 1065, one year before the Norman invasion. The earliest churches seem to have been constructed very simply, probably of wattle and daub, and it was not until the 10th and 11th centuries that towers, spires and altars appeared. It seems that at this period there were two sorts of church — some had transepts and others had towers as well.

By the 13th century, stone was being used for church construction. What is fascinating is the way that our churches went through several centuries of constant alteration. To name but one example, St. Helena's church at Benson, originally built by Offa, was rebuilt around 1140. Some thirty years later, the chancel and nave were extended, and a number of new windows provided. Some of these survive to the present day. Shortly after 1200 a chancel arch, aisles and arcades were added. The church was re-roofed in the late 15th or 16th century, and in the 19th century a major restoration was carried out.

Even today, interior alterations are going on to provide a nave altar.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, a number of decorated memorials showing effigies of various families were built in local churches. At Dorney, for example, the Garrard family has not only a private chapel, but is also commemorated by effigies in marble and plaster. At Bray, William Goddard is modelled in an alabaster wall monument, while at Bisham the Hoby family has its own tomb and chapel. In this church there are several monuments to this family, including effigies and a beautiful monument featuring four swans with outstretched wings. To take but one more example, at Hambleden there is an alabaster model of Sir Cope D'Oyley with his wife and children.

These monuments, together with a detailed history of the various churches in which they are housed, are described and photographed in Graham Martin's book. In addition, details of brasses are also described, which will be of interest to the many people who have taken up the hobby of brass rubbing.

For anyone who is interested in the history of our local churches, this book by Graham Martin is a "must." It is superbly produced, with many very good photographs, and is an excellent guidebook to churches of the Thames Valley.



Invisible imbecile inside

the office

THERE'S A new "boffin" at the UK Atomic Energy Authority, Harwell who, colleagues say, is a genius.

Yet many of us would find him insufferable.

For instance he insists on working in a temperature of 75 degrees fahrenheit. Only five degrees hotter and he goes on strike.

He never takes tea breaks or cracks jokes.

He has a habit of uncovering everyone else's mistakes and broadcasting them to the entire department.

But as any colleague will tell you, he is infallible.

The loyalty which can develop between men / women and machine — yes, this new "boffin" is a computer — is one which never ceases to amaze non-specialist outsiders.

Most of us hate or even fear computers — with the exception of Ernie. For the only time we're made aware of their steely hand in our affairs is when a bill, a pay cheque or a bank account is wrong. We damn the computer responsible.

But, according to the computer experts I met at Harwell, we're being very unfair. "It's always humans who make the mistakes, not computers," I heard time and again.

"What computers do is to show up one's inadequacies," said Mr D. S. Sadler, computer manager of the central computer in Harwell's Computer Science

and Systems Division.

Dr A. Langsford, Principal Scientific Officer, Networks Group, said he considered that computers did, nevertheless, suffer from the Caesar syndrome: "The evil that (they) do lives after them, the good . . . etc."

"We, the public remember just their errors. We never take note of the millions of times and cases in which they got everything right."

There is also a tendency, said Dr Langsford, for people to fear computers, merely because they couldn't understand what makes them function.

"That is the reason why people nowadays are likely to be more interested in old steam engines. In the past you could see these things working, you could see why the pistons pushed and the wheels turned."

"You can't see what makes a computer work, and that is why it is mysterious to the man in the street."

Harwell's new computer has been installed there at a cost of "many millions" of pounds, and is the third largest in the country. It has roughly 1,500 users, can do about 50 jobs at a time, can produce graphs and drawings as well as print and figures, can diagnose any faults which may arise within its systems, and is two to five times

faster than the computer it replaces.

And yet to look at, it is extremely dull — just an assemblage of large red or grey boxes, some typewriter consoles and yards of punched white tape.

Mrs Caroline Sambell, aged 22, one of the operators who

work with the machine (sadly he has no name, but is just "IT") admits she, too, was disappointed at their initial meeting.

"Before I came here I used to think of a computer as a bit like the things in Dr Who, full of flashing lights and buzzing signs."

"Sometimes the job of tearing off the type and sorting the punch cards for it can become boring."

Mr Sadler showed me the many codes by which the computer tells operators of any errors in the programmes or tasks it is given. For instance, if an unauthorised operator were to request an illegal return — such as another man's salary — the computer would feed back code 0D03 and refuse to tell him.

If someone were to try and stop the machine mid-programme it would feed back a code for "operation exception."

"It doesn't like being interrupted at all," said Mr Sadler.

One code name "Operation cancel with dump" sounded

ABOVE: the area where work is received for processing and results are printed. Three line-printers with total capacity of 4,000 lines per minute, produce output for 7,000 jobs per week.



The main control console of the Harwell Central Computer. From left to right:
D.S. Sadler Computer Manager
C.L. Wade Operations Supervisor
Mrs. C. Sambell
Dr. A. Langsford Group Leader Networks Group

genius

rather threatening. But Mr Sadler assured me it was merely the procedure to say there had been an error, the programme should be stopped, but the computer would still retain the "dump," ie the store copy of information needed to work out the programme.

Should anything go wrong in the computer's mechanism (it did when I was there), it switches itself off and an engineer is summoned. He presses a certain switch and the computer sets out its own diagnosis telling him that the fault lies in, say, block 34. The engineer then knows he has to go to control box 34 and carry out more detailed examination.

It is at times of failure like this that operators are tempted to display some exasperation with their "genius". Mrs Sambell and Mr Wade pointed me to the two items which stand atop one console as reminders of the machine's humble origins.

one child's abacus and its "operator," a plaster squirrel.

Dr Langsford told me: "I know some people have a computer programme which prompts it to say 'Get lost' or 'Go away, I'm trying to sleep.'"

"Then I have heard of a computer which, at the bottom of every page of a particularly long report, printed 'Now wash your hands'."

The role the new computer will play at Harwell is varied and highly advanced.

Not only can it record stock and salary data as most of its smaller brethren, but it can work out the actual lines of physical research which may be necessary to carry out a certain project or piece of research, listing time and materials to be involved, and carrying out all the detailed mathematical calculations that research may call for.

Other modern systems, said Dr Langsford, can now be used as an aid to management too, in working out how best to divide a certain number of projects between a certain number of technicians in a certain time with a certain set of materials and financial limitations.

It could also be used to determine which member of staff was likely to be free at a certain time to take on a particular new assignment. "By carrying out such duties a computer can leave a manager free to do what he always does best: making inspired judgements.

"I think of a computer rather as a pair of pliers to assist the mind in its creative work."

Another member of Harwell's staff, totally unconnected with the computer division, said that when he tires of hearing of the computer's brilliance, he comforts himself with this apocryphal tale.

A computer was programmed to translate between English and Russian. The operator fed it with the phrase: "Out of sight, out of mind." Back came the Russian. He then fed back the Russian phrase for re-translation.

Out came the answer: "Invisible imbecile!"

By permission of "Oxford Mail" with photographs taken for "Harlequin" by Eric Jenkins.

Going on through the War with the ladies: local women from all around dealt with the fruit crops, all the cherries and the apples and the pears and the soft fruit. There was always plenty going on what with the farms here and at Blewbury and up at Churn. Of course you know we had a whole host of airmen up at the aerodrome where the Atomic place is now. And we had evacuees.

I remember especially one Christmas Eve the phone rang and I answered. "Hello!" a man's voice said, "Happy Christmas!" "The same to you!" I replied. "But who are you?" "We're airmen from the station who were unlucky in the draw for Christmas leave and we'd like to know if you'd like us to sing some carols to you over the phone." So several voices sang a carol to us. Very nice it was. "Thank you!" I said. "Where are you singing from?" "Oh! We're in the phone box just down Harwell Street."

So I said, "Well if you'd like to walk along to us I'll be at the gate to meet you and we'll entertain you with a little drink or something and we'll all sing." So I did and six or seven men came along, just young lads they were and we called in the land girls and Mrs. Frost, our evacuee with her little boy - she was upstairs all on her own. And there was my wife and little Judy. We all went in to the lounge and there was the old house suddenly transformed into a very merry house and a home for all those people who couldn't get home to their families.

We had sandwiches and drinks and kept the party up till well after midnight. We sang round the piano and one fellow, an older, quieter one than the rest danced round and round with Judy in his arms, she'd be about five or six then. As he got up to go he slipped a ten shilling note into her hand. Perhaps behind that little gift was a great deal of feeling. What would you say? The whole jolly evening was so unexpected and often these little surprises are so much more pleasurable than things laid on.

The aerodrome was going on all during the War but it was so hidden in a fold of the Downs that the Germans never really found it. One day a stray plane dropped a little stick of bombs. I was up at our Churn Farm when I saw it drop. Then there was a big flaming fire. They'd been making an underground place to store bombs where it hit and set fire to a petrol tank which was covered with grass and the grass was dry and went up. Only one man was injured, he still lives in the village.

Another day about five o'clock when they were loading the buses at the gate an aircraft suddenly flew over and machinegunned the hangars. They lost four Wellington bombers and nobody was hurt. Everybody stampeded into the buses which drove off hell for leather. It was marvelously lucky it was that time of day. Earlier the aerodrome would have been crowded.

Another stray Gerry dropped three bombs one day in our farm at Harwell gate. I've got a bit of it here somewhere.

He laid a heavy six-inch-long piece of jagged, reddish grey metal on the table. Running his fingers down its wickedly sharp edge. Cut a man in two it would. It's hard steel made still harder by the heat of the explosion.

It was after that biggest of all explosions at Hiroshima that our government thought they'd better start making atom bombs at home and they decided on Harwell as the first place. The villages around made some objection to this, 34 acres from this farm being devoted to this dangerous thing and we'd all got on so well with the airmen. When the aerodrome was closing down my wife and I were invited up there to a farewell party. You couldn't have had a nicer party. Each officer was detailed to one family and were just watching for the bottom of your glass to fill it up. They didn't want to leave any booze to be blown up by the atom bomb! There were two or three parties in all. They had wonderful mess-rooms and club-rooms. All the big hangars were in use. They put the reactors in there and I've no doubt they used these mess-rooms as directors' quarters.

I'll tell you about the end of the aerodrome. One day in 1945 one of my men was ploughing with a tractor in that part of the field where I found this bomb piece. Up came a uniformed officer, one of the Top Brass and asked him politely to take his tractor back to the farm. He himself, he



THE CHERRY BARN

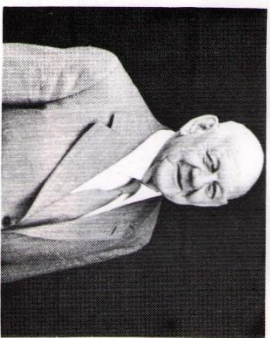
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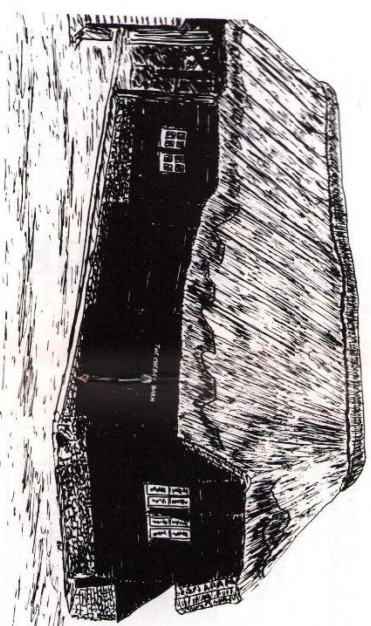
KATHLEEN PHILIP

(Author of Reflected in Wantage, Black Wantage, Victorian Wantage, Memoirs of Sarah Jane Harris.)



Photographs & Drawings by Reg Wilkinson M R C

A copy of "The Cherry Barn" is obtainable for 70p from Miss Philip at 22 Belmont, Wantage, postage 8p, or, if your curiosity is aroused further, from Mr. Bosley's fruit store in Harwell.



said, was going down to see me. So along he came and said to me, "I want you to stop ploughing that field, please." "When?" I asked. "Now, today!" he replied. Well it was War time and we had to obey the generals so I told the man to put the tractor away and went inside. That was about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Next morning I walked up to the field near the aerodrome and I just couldn't believe my eyes. It was covered with huts and concrete paths. Away in one corner latrines had been built and the whole field was crawling with airborne troops. In and above the surrounding fields big Stirling gliders and bombers were practising and being serviced. And all this had been done in the eighteen hours since my man had left the field. All done in the black-out.

A night or so later I was sleeping when I was awakened by the roar of planes overhead, hundreds of planes which swooped round and made off in the direction of the South coast, heading straight for the Normandy beaches. I went up to my field. The huts and the concrete slabs were all still there but there wasn't a soul about. That was in June. Nothing was done about it and when it got to February I found out where the land-agent's office was and went to see him. "How long do you want my field?" I asked him. "Oh! We don't need it any more," he said, "but I'll take ages to get all that stuff removed." I looked at him. "But I can't wait ages," I said. "We can take all the buildings down and remove the concrete and get a crop in this week. All I can plant now is potatoes anyway as it's mid-February. Have I your permission?" He seemed a bit disbelieving but he gave his permission and I hurried back home. All the men turned to and we got these potatoes in. The huts were of no value, just abestos, breeze blocks and temporary stuff. When we lifted the paths we found all sorts of troubles, water piping to and from some of the huts and the latrines - all that, that had been laid in that one night.

All the concrete slabs were useful. I sold some of them to friends and some of our outside floors are still laid with them. When we came to the latrines we found under the corner of one slab a beautiful pig-skin wallet. The stitching had all rotted with damp.

Do you know one day long afterwards a man called King, whose wife came from Mansfield called. He'd been an officer among these D-Day troops and he told me that every night from June 2nd - June 6th each man was issued with French money in case they went but if they didn't go it had to be taken in again. "And you know," he said, "even though we'd given each man the same amount, by the next day it had got into the hands of a few, and always the same few. They betted. They'd bet on anything. Sometimes they got beetles in from the fields and put them on the floor boards to race and take odds on them."

Gordon Bosley rose and looked out over his garden. That's what the Communists don't realise. Even if you take a million pounds and give each one of a million people one pound, in no time at all you'll have a few hundred people with thousands and a few thousands with next to nothing. It's human nature and you can't get over it.

After the War change became even faster. First of all we had the Atomic. The population of Harwell used to be about 900 and it's gone up to over 1,600 now. Made a great difference in the village it has.

One of my most faithful customers was John Massfield. He lived over at Abingdon and he and his daughter used to come in regularly. See all these cards and letters from him! He wrote a poem on "Cherries" which was all about my Cherry Barn. I have it here framed. Which are my favourite lines? I like them all but especially -

The sun, the earth, the bees, the rain, the dew,
These five remain, and man's inspired skill
Beguiles the five to bring the cherry still.

OXFORD AREA ARTS COUNCIL

Dr. BARRIE DALE, CHAIRMAN
(Nuclear Physics Div.)

The Oxford Area Arts Council was created in October 1973 to foster the Arts, in the broadest sense of the word and at all levels of accomplishment, throughout the County of Oxfordshire. The aim is not to usurp the functions of local groups, but to help and encourage them, while also being of service to individuals.

The OAAC has taken over The Old Fire Station, Gloucester Green, Oxford, for conversion into an Arts Centre. There are facilities for painters, dancers and musicians, a hall for performances, and considerable exhibition space. A silversmiths workshop is under construction, and a pottery workshop is contemplated. A recent and very successful venture has been an Art Workshop for Young People (5-18 years) on Saturday mornings—fun and creativity while Mum does the shopping.

In May 1974 the OAAC organised an Oxfordshire Carnival. This was a considerable success, and may become an annual event.

Like most voluntary organisations, the OAAC is short of money and of manpower. In the present period of expansion, the assistance of experienced administrators would be particularly welcome. Offers of help or general enquiries would be equally welcome on Oxford 722648.



Photographs taken by Louis D. Parke at the Winter Arts Festival held in the Old Fire Station Arts Centre, November 1974.

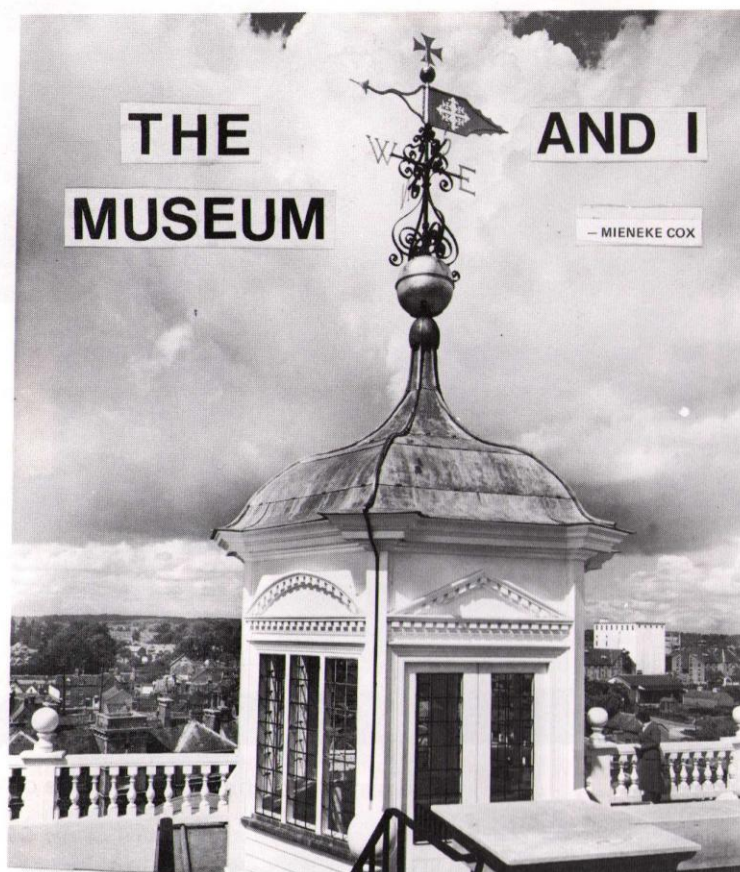


On my first day in office the Town Clerk, Mr. Nicholson, conducted me over the newly redecorated top floor. New lighting and storage heaters had been installed by the Ministry; all Dr. O'Connor's cases had been dismantled. The Town Clerk opened the door to the large West room with an enormous key, and we peered through a narrow gap at a stack of assorted Strange Articles, wood, glass and innumerable boxes: the contents of Dr. O'Connor's cases. The stack stretched from one end of the 30-foot-long room to the other. In my ignorance I asked Mr. Nicholson where the catalogue of all those things was. He looked blank and suggested that I'd better make one myself. So sorting out that mountain was one job I had not bargained for—I had to find out as soon as possible where everything was in the Museum, for immediately people came to ask for this and that, and I, who had thought I could find out by studying a neat list of contents, was supposed to know all the answers. But it was July, and instead of attacking The Mountain there were staff-holiday problems to deal with and parties to be shown over the Museum. These parties naturally wanted to go up on the roof, which was officially closed to the public, so I had to take them up myself, through the "Borough Attic." I of course apologised for the state of the attic, but soon discovered that a Tour of the Chaos appealed to visitors much more than viewing the more orthodox Hall. At least it was novel and surprising!

Visitors to the main Museum Hall had no idea of the chaos over their heads, neither were they aware of the far worse state of the basement. The Council had let this off as a café for some years, but after an excellent start this venture had failed. During Eve Harris's curatorship the "Mousehole", containing the only loos and water supply in the building, was cut off from the rest of the County Hall, but in July 1970 the Town Clerk informed me that the tenant had agreed to leave, so that I could use the basement as a lecture-and-activities-room especially for schoolchildren. So one morning Mr. Austin, my faithful attendant, descended the stairs into the "Mousehole" to survey our new territory, while I waited at the top. "Don't come down, it is terrible", he shouted—so of course I was down like a shot. Together we stood, speechless, amidst the debris of broken furniture and rubbish, while electric wires dangled over our heads where the light fittings had been torn out. The only good thing to be said about that dank hole, where everything was covered with grease, was that not a single mouse was to be seen.

So that was the state of affairs in

summer 1970, shouting out for re-organisation on all three floors. In September I attacked the Mountain in the West Room, after the archaeologists had cleared the way into the room. A junior archaeologist, Roger Thomas, and I started opening up boxes at the edge of the Mountain, and were soon so thrilled by our strange task that we worked like furries. "This is like indoor archaeology", exclaimed Roger, "One never knows what turns up next." We found articles mentioned in our only guide, Dr. O'Connor's little green booklet; a bomb, wrapped in a black lace blouse; a strange collection of shaving brushes; beautiful quartzes and Victoriana. We packed everything in the stout boxes which Eve had ordered, labelling and listing as we went along; the boxes were arranged methodically on the new metal shelves in one of the North rooms, which now became a Store suitable for a Proper Museum. Roger, Mr. Austin and I examined every possible corner of the County Hall until we knew the whole place inside out. Our knowledge was immediately committed to paper so that nothing depended on a fallible human memory.



The wife of George Cox (Harwell's Environmental & Medical Sciences Div.) concludes the story of how she came to receive the keys of Abingdon's County Hall.

One glorious Sunday afternoon in September our archaeologist, P.C. Bill Fuller, helped the children and myself to move the last heavy items out of the West Room, which was immediately christened the Work-Room. The question was what we were going to put in it: we needed work-surfaces most of all. These we manufactured out of old shopcases; a wobbly old table was mended by Mr. Austin, and Eve's new desk was moved from the sunless North Room she had used as a workroom. I had already bought a kettle, a water container and washing-up equipment, so that life in the County Hall began to be quite civilised.

That autumn my education regarding the County Hall continued. Visiting groups of schoolchildren, listening to the Tale of Abingdon in the Work-Room, taught me how interesting the County Hall was. I began to love the building, even when the autumn gales began to howl around it and a new, immediate need arose: more heaters and arctic clothing. One morning I arrived to find the cupola stairs awash after a fierce S.W. gale, so my set of washing-up bowls was immediately put under the drips, and the cry went forth



Work in hand renovating the balustrade of County Hall

to the Department of the Environment: "The cupola leaks". Four years later, after several attempts at stopping the leak, the cry still sounds as loud as ever. But one gets attached to a leak: it now has its own set of orange plastic bowls.

Meanwhile I changed the displays in the Main Hall as best I could with those difficult cases, lack of lighting, too much light in summer and far too great variations in temperature for some of the delicate objects. As a housewife, I was alive to the danger of fading and use of the wrong glues and chemicals, so if in doubt I asked the advice of Oxford City and County Museum. At meetings of the Area Museum Service I met other curators, and was delighted to discuss common problems. After all, they were quite human, most helpful, and quite unlike the television image of the profession.

In 1971 the Borough Council granted funds to rehabilitate the erstwhile Mousehole, but as the Department found the salt-exuding stone troublesome, new lighting had to be put in twice, and it was summer 1972 when my first party of visitors could be accommodated in the Basement to hear my Tale of Abingdon. By that time I was experienced in Tours of Abingdon in all conditions: I knew shady spots to sit down in when conducting a group in murderous heat, and I also learnt to cut out talking in the street, against traffic noise, by giving introductory talks in the basement.

The greatest attraction of the County Hall is no doubt the splendid view from the roof and, like Dr. O'Connor, I wanted to re-open the top floor so that the public could be allowed on the roof. In May 1971 all these dreams were squashed when the inspecting architect of the Department pronounced the balustrade unsafe. Now, autumn 1974, the gloss coat is being put on a brand-new balustrade, and various other improvements are in progress.

Much has changed in the County Hall since 1970. The Council, generous in its last years, granted money for conservation work, so that the collections are now in a reasonable state of health. The building is still cold, in spite of added heaters, but at least there are now chairs and electric kettles on all three levels. In the Basement, classes and archaeologists meet regularly, while the gas-engine is lovingly restored by a devoted band of engineers under John Mitchell's leadership. One day it will be as shining as when the Queen saw it in 1956 and, better still, the engineers hope to get it into working order. In the Main Hall visitors can sit on new, comfortable chairs and admire the restored Grinling Gibbons mirror-frame. The top floor buzzes with life several times a week when John Mason Sixth-Formers help with jobs. The Work-Room still has its old shopcases, and the other rooms have no display furniture whatsoever as yet, but at least the roof is nearly ready.

The main issue at present is the future. Until its demise in April 1974 the Borough Council owned and ran the County Hall. Now the Town Council carries the responsibility of looking after the Museum until Oxford County Council is able to help share the burden. In the present financial climate the improvement policy of the last few years has been halted, but at least we are able to carry on work with schools, projects and all the routine correspondence and queries.

Finally, I must confess that the Museum pushed the publication of my book into the background. Though I am supposed to be only a part-time curator, sometimes, when the 'phone rings late in the evening and I dispense historical advice when I'd much rather go to sleep, I feel more like an all-time curator. Work at the Abbey and at St. Helen's church, talks to societies and W.E.A. courses further add to the joys of life. In September and early October this year St. Helen's pageant was an unforgettable experience, in spite of its shortcomings and problems. Now at last, during this Pageant, preparations for the book's publication advanced rapidly: when this article is printed, the book should be on sale (in the Museum, of course). Many more books should be added to the far too restricted literature about the history of Abingdon, including perhaps a nicely illustrated booklet about the County Hall and the Abingdon Borough Museum.

WORK BY HARWELL ARTISTS

CONTRASTING ENTRIES

IN LAST YEAR'S

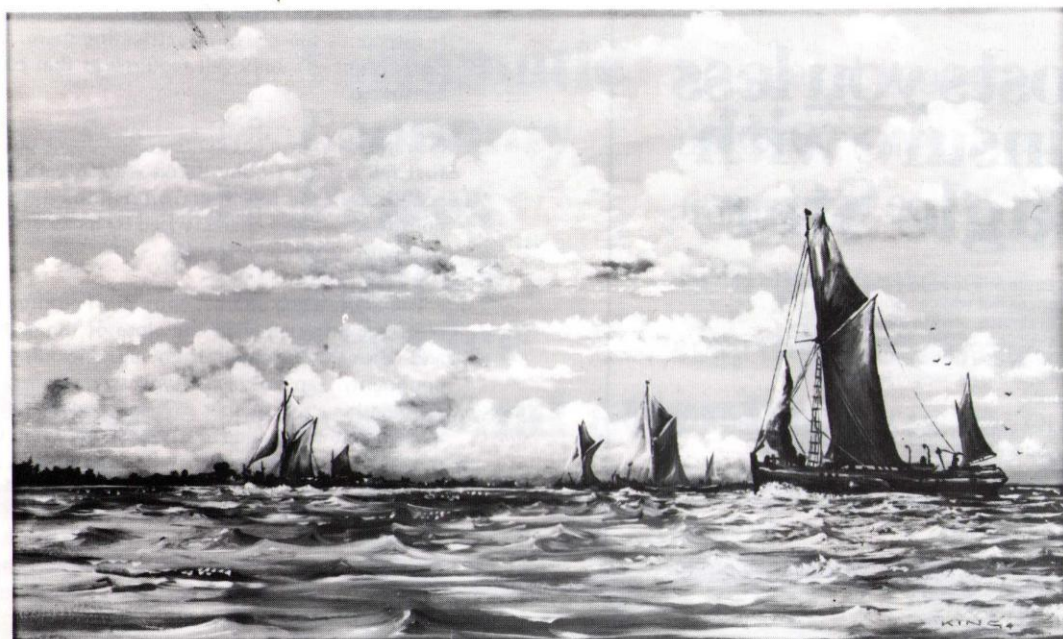
HARWELL ART EXHIBITION

Diamond-Point Engraved Glasses

by G.C. Best (Contract Research)



"Under plain sail" by T.A.T. King (R.R.D.)





20-YEAR SERVICE

SEATED (left to right) — Mrs. V. M. Kirk, P. J. Rose, R. F. Mills, J. A. Wagstaffe.

STANDING (left to right) — V. J. Playford, Dr. H. A. Kearsey, E. Saunders, .I. S. Jones.

**"HARLEQUIN", G159, Bldg. 77,
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In the recent "Who are they?" competition, the first correct entry opened was from Peter Smallbone, to whom a cheque has been sent. The staff were **standing l.t.r.:** D. D. Hunt, E. H. Aldworth, D. Knight, S. J. Snowdon; **sitting l.t.r.:** F. J. Minter, J. A. Curley.

WRESTLING COMES TO DIDCOT The large audience at the New Coronet Cinema was hushed as Zolton Bostac got into the ring to be dwarfed by the European middleweight champion. A lightweight, Bostac was stand-in for the heavier Tony St. Clair who had been injured while wrestling in Germany.

If ever McManus himself deserved sympathy rather than hate, it was unexpectedly in this bout, as the young Hungarian countered expertly with his greater speed and skill to get the first fall in round two. Not until round four did McManus, getting increasingly angry, achieve an equalizing submission. Only then by using his weight and his characteristic rule-breaking, which earned him a public warning between rounds four and five, was he able to slow Bostac down. It was soon after McManus had received his second and final public warning that he gained the second submission with a Boston crab, to be booed from the ring, the winner in name only.

The supporting bouts contrasted well. The lightweight contest between Mick West and Dick Conlon was fought with such sportsmanship as to suggest they came not from just the same county of Kent but from the same Buffalo Lodge! There was plenty of action, however, with the third round ending in their being tied in such a knot that round four began before referee and seconds succeeded in extricating them. Dick Conlon got the only fall required as that round continued.

In the middleweight contest, Ken Joyce got the first fall against Robby Baron who, nevertheless, equalized in the fourth and won in the sixth in a bout that was also characterised by its sportsmanship with no public warnings.

The lightweight contest with Bill Torontos was placed appropriately at the close of the evening and brought laughter from all, including his opponent, Ivan Penzecoﬀ who was admired for keeping his good temper amidst wrestling of the most unorthodox kind. Penzecoﬀ was in no way put out by losing the first fall in round two, and equalized after a drop kick in round four. Torontos appeared to make many mistakes, such as releasing his opponent as he took his hands off to applaud himself for a rare successful move. His unpredictable tactics once again reaped victory, however, when his final fall gained in the fifth brought to an end a bout that was enjoyed by all.

D.A.T.

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