



*Frederick Gibberd meets local Parish Councillors to explain the Master Plan*

## **Dear HCS Members**

Here is part two of the Civic Society's Anniversary Newsletter. We hope you enjoy it as much as Part one. Who knows - it may trigger an influx of more pieces which might lead to a part three.

**Barbara Burge**

## **Newhall**

Newhall is the brainchild of the brothers Jon and William Moen. Their family farmed the land on which Newhall now stands. Their grandfather had grown roses, peas and rhubarb on the land. The brothers determined that their earlier disappointment over the development of Church Langley should not happen again. They decided that design and place making should be the guiding principles. The term "place making" would seem to have to do with a concern for what features of a housing development contribute to the establishment of a vibrant community.

“We have a responsibility to this place. Our family has lived here, our roots are here. So, it was important for us to create a community that would be recognised for its quality of design and quality of life” William Moen has said.

In line with their principles, Newhall Projects, the company the brothers set up, sold the farmland in parcels to developers accompanied by strict guidelines. They invited developer and architect partnerships to submit designs for each parcel. The developers had to work closely with the architects, something the brothers had observed had not tended to happen during their earlier venture into development. Every house would be within sixty-five yards of a open green space, which occupies forty per cent of the 280 acre site. The result was an intriguing mixture of architectural styles in a pleasurable garden-like setting. When complete, Newhall will have 2,500 homes of which over half have now been built. There are already two thriving coffee shops and a mini supermarket. There are also plans for a community centre, which Newhall residents will run eventually.

Newhall has continued the town's tradition by commissioning works from contemporary artists and placing them in the development's communal areas. In conjunction with the Harlow Art Trust, Newhall ran a competition to create a work in memory of Lady Pat Gibberd, a dedicated patron of the arts, whose husband Sir Frederick master-planned Harlow.



William Moen says: "Lady Gibberd thought that good art should be made available to everybody, especially in situations where they would be exposed to it and inspired by it during their everyday lives. Her ethos of bringing art to the people of Harlow is very much in line with our thinking at Newhall." The winning sculpture was by Ekkehard Altenberger.

The abstract work, made from Norwegian Larvekite granite, is called *Sophrosyne* - a Greek philosophical term which means prudence and moderation.

**Robin McCartney**

## **Driving to Harlow**

Between 1990 and 1992 I drove 52.6 miles on a daily round trip to teach in Stewards School in Harlow. That's 29,982 miles and every one was worth it. Living in London I was used to the difference of wealth and poverty which is the

disfiguring outcome of the English class system. It was now refreshing and inspiring to work in a town which was purpose built to leave all that behind and to start with ideas of all citizens being equal - and have space to flourish as individuals and communities.

I only met parents when discussing their children's progress – but I was struck by the optimism and resolution they had, together with all of the staff, to make the best of the resources available – and in a co-operative ethos across the town itself. I have seen many schools and communities across England since then – but Harlow remains for me the best and most admirable example of a place to live in and be proud to call home.

**Katie Barratt**

## Harlow Jottings

### The House

We moved to a new terraced house in Harefield, Harlow New Town (pram town) in October 1954. The area was still a building site, and if a man had a job working on the buildings he could choose a house as they were being built. So Dad got a job as an electrician and chose no 18.

The houses had lovely red doorsteps that were polished with Cardinal floor polish, brown polished marley tiles downstairs (some contained asbestos!) with bare gardens separated by chain link fencing so you could see right up the row of back gardens. There was a big larder and each house was even complete with a New World gas cooker.

The houses had open coal fires (no central heating then) with the coal being shot straight into the understair cupboard. There were slats at the front to hold the coal in and you had to shovel it out at the bottom. The understair cupboard in my house in The Downs still has a smell of coal dust. That year, 1954, there was a very bad winter so what with the coal dust and the mud from outside there was a lot of cleaning to be done.



*Harefield*

Every house had a baby in it. My sister had just been born in January 1954 just before we moved and to get to the shops – either at Burgoyne Hatch or at The Stow, mum had to struggle through the mud pushing the big -wheeled pram. Every estate in the New Town was designed with a 'Hatch' of shops, a new pub, a church and a common room, with a children's playground with swings nearby, all surrounded by trees and some green space.

As the area developed at Burgoyne Hatch we got a butchers, a greengrocers, a grocers, a newsagents, a hairdressers, The Purple Emperor pub and a locally

famous fish and chip shop. On Saturdays the queue for fish and chips went right down to our house in Harefield. The butchers closed down when the butcher cut his stomach open !

### **The Stow**

The Stow was the first of the bigger shopping areas in the New Town to be finished and you could buy everything there.



*The Stow in 1956*

With a road running through it was always busy with lots of new shops:

- a Co-op – new-fangled ‘help yourself’ store with the nice round window by the till and tins stacked up in a pyramid. Later, a Co-Op bakery roundsman came round the houses with a tray of bread and cakes. You had to give your ‘divi’ number – ours was 096764. We could only have Marie biscuits and hardly ever got cakes from the tray, as my Grandad worked for the Co Op bakery in Enfield and he would always bring cream cakes over on a Saturday.
- a Home and Colonial grocers that had a delivery boy on a black bike.
- 2 Bakers – Pearces and Dorringtons,
- 2 greengrocers,
- 2 butchers, where you could buy proper cuts of meat
- Frances Henry’s - a general shop that sold everything,
- A hardware shop selling car spares and bits for your bike
- a proper post office,
- a library
- a bank

- 2 newsagents– one was Harrisons - selling sweets from lots of jars. My favourite was rhubarb and custard and tubes of Spangles boiled sweets.
- a wet fish shop,
- a carpet shop
- 2 hairdressers,
- A laundrette
- Shoe shop – was it Batas?
- Escotts furniture and electrical shop where you could ‘pay in’ weekly to their savings club as there was no such thing as a credit card then. Mum saw a ‘cottage style’ 3 piece suite with modern wooden arms and we looked at it every time we went to the Co-Op and she eventually saved up enough to but it (and I’m still sitting on it).
- There was also a dress shop run by the mother of my then school friend Cheryl Cocklin (alias Cheryl St Claire who married Michael Barrymore). She was the only girl who could dance properly at our birthday parties!

Every bank holiday on the field behind Moot House at the Stow a big fair turned up with caged animals and swing boats. There was always something going on at Moot House – Fetes, country dance festivals, the model railway club, jumble sales and even a rolling skating marathon. The Queen visited several times.

The Harlequin social club was above Dorringtons the bakers. This was fitted out with up-to-date 50s and 60s décor. Regular dances were held there and also at Moot Hall across the road.

On the corner (where Aldi is now) there was Kennings petrol station with a garage for car repairs behind. When I was sent there for gaskets for Dad’s motor bike they always seemed to give me the wrong bit and I’d have to do back again!

St Andrews Hall in the Stow was a new Methodist church, a lovely light and airy building which was useful to the whole community. With very good acoustics, a smaller hall with kitchen and several other rooms it was and still is used for music exams and rehearsals, concerts and even for the popular Harlow Classical Music festival. With classes of different standards. Certificates and prizes were given to the winners.

## St Andrew’s Methodist Church



1954 – 2019

Celebrating 65 Years

A regular Sunday afternoon 'thing' was to go for a family walk to see how people had done up their fronts and what net curtains they had up.

Round the corner from our house is The Quarry, which was done up with children's swings, climbing frames, a zip wire and best of all the long sloping path down - good for roller skating. Surrounding the Quarry are the 'Banana block' flats and the high rise Pennymead Tower.

### **Doctors**

At first our Doctors' surgery was in a house in Long Ley. The waiting room was downstairs and the examination room was upstairs. When Sydenham House opened in 1955 we had Dr Sharnegeil – a medic who my Grandad had served with during his time in France during the 2nd world war. At the new surgery there were rows of oval backed wooden chairs, some with arms and a big polished table - Ercol Blond furniture and also a miniature version for the children. The Doctor would give each child a bon bon boiled sweet for being good.

### **Work**

Once the houses were built Dad went to work in factories at the Pinnacles, cycling there and back with hundreds of men as there was a lot of new industry starting up.

Mum didn't go out to work but she did 'homework' A lady up the road was an agent for a toy firm and lots of the ladies in Harefield painted toy soldiers to earn a bit. Dad moved the coal out to a coal bunker in the garden and built lots of shelves in the understair cupboard for the trays of drying enamel painted guardsmen.

### **School**

Our local school was The Spinney but as it wasn't built when I started school we had to traipse right down to Mark Hall Mansion, the old house near to St Mary at Latton church.

### **Brays Grove**

The secondary schools were part of the new 'comprehensive' school system but some headmasters wanted to keep up the traditions of the grammar schools, so Mr Bottoms , head of Brays Grove ,still strolled round the school in his gown and mortar board.

I started going to Brays Grove school (demolished in 2008) on the bus, complete with school beret – that didn't last long though. It was quicker to walk to school or go by bike down the lanes past Puffers Green clocktower.



All the Harlow schools were well -designed – and Brays Grove had a lovely Hall, sunken down with a gallery around for doing plays in the round, a large stage with a huge area behind for props etc. And behind that there was a swimming pool and changing rooms. Our form room

one year was in the technical drawing office, which smelled lovely of polish – girls weren't allowed to do technical drawing though!

### **Mark Hall**

Had 2 classroom blocks and 2 halls with a nice long corridor between them. The entrance hall was very modern looking with lots of glass with an open staircase up to the staff room. The big hall was a venue for concerts with a large balcony for the audience and also a big stage.

### **The Spinney.**

We were always lining up to go into the hall for assembly, choir or hymn singing with Mr Rand, who played clarinet and told us about a new Saturday morning music school starting up at Latton Bush. So off we went to Cambridge to buy a clarinet for me and a couple of years later a flute for my sister.

### **Saturday morning music schools**

We walked to Latton Bush every Saturday to one of the 6 brilliant music schools. There were a lot of very good young music teachers straight out of the London colleges including John Stevens and Ray Bamber. Hundreds of children learned music and there were orchestras, bands, recorder groups. A lot of children went on to make a career in music. From that era at least 6 of us went off to study music as a career and many of others who are still playing now.

### **The High**

There was a cramped fabric shop in Little Walk - Tanners -which had a sky light and a lovely smell. It was stacked up with bolts of all kinds of material for furnishings and ladies' clothes, which were home-made then. Mum taught us to sew our own clothes on her big Singer machine and there was always somebody on the floor cutting out something. I made a lovely bright orange mini dress with a mandarin collar to wear to a civic reception in the telephone exchange building (next to Sainsburys) with my long black kinky boots. The height of sophistication was when a shop selling 'coffee beans' opened in Little Walk.



### **Things to do**

- Regal Cinema – the first post-World War 2 cinema built in England. Designed by F Gibberd, to be either a temporary cinema or a factory unit in Templefields Industrial estate. Opened August 1952, closed in 1960

when the new Odeon opened. The Regal was then converted into a factory – Regal works, and is now offices – Regal House.

- A Bowling alley in The High 1961- 1973
- Swimming pool on 1st Avenue 1961
- Sports Centre. There was an athletics stadium and cricket pavilion. We could go to the Sports centre in the games lesson at Mark Hall. So, we'd spend nearly all afternoon walking to the centre and then about 30 mins doing archery – the least energetic sport going!
- Ski slope. Down behind Sainsburys where there is now housing
- Town Square in the Summer for an outdoor show. There was an art shop then upstairs in the Rows.
- Stone Cross Hall, The High, opened in 1956 was renamed the Birdcage 1966. We loved going there to 'dances'. Not real dancing just bouncing around our handbags in our miniskirts with backcombed hair and nude pan lipstick.
- Playhouse 1971
- Snooker hall above library 1979
- Harlow Youth orchestra, Harlow Symphony Orchestra founded as an evening class at the Harlow Technical College, Harlow Operatic Society, Harlow Brass band all started in 1960s
- Harlow Art society began as an evening class and put on regular art exhibitions and took over market.
- By 1980 there were at least 80 cultural societies.
- 5 youth clubs
- A Town show took place every year in the Town Park with cattle and horse judging, a vegetable show and competition plus flower and produce competitions.

**Jeanne Mann**

## **The Alburni Plaque**

Members probably know about HCS's latest plaque which celebrates the foundation of the Alburni String Quartet in 1962. There will be a celebration concert at St John's Arc in Old Harlow on 8th July, where the plaque will be unveiled. We will let members know the details in due course.

**Barbara Burge**



## Harlow Town Centre Masterplan



In February the Council consulted on a Masterplan for the Town Centre, which has now been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that will be used in the determination of planning applications.

We see an SPD as essential in ensuring the badly- needed regeneration of the Town Centre is done in a complete, planned and well-designed fashion.

Given the disparate ownership of the Town Centre there is a significant risk of piecemeal, inappropriate and poor-quality developments coming forward. We found the guidance in the master plan to be comprehensive and detailed, which we hope will significantly reduce the risk of poor developments in this key location. You can read the document [here](#). The SPD was approved by the Council Cabinet on 24th March.

We supported the Vision and Objectives and particularly welcomed the retention of the ethos and overall composition of the Gibberd Masterplan and the spatial principles set out in the SPD.

We believe the sections on Opportunity Areas giving guidance for each part of the Town Centre are important in setting out the overall development framework and agreed that flexibility in meeting this guidance is needed. We have not however considered all the details of the guidance in this section and will comment further when specific schemes are proposed.

The key challenge we see is how to get a co-ordinated programme of developments across all areas in terms of design, timescales and consistency with the SPD, so that further deterioration of parts of the Town Centre is halted, while redevelopment takes place in other parts. As is recognised, we already see the contrast between the Water Gardens and Town Centre North, for example, and support the aim of ensuring that this does not get worse. We support the proposed delivery partnerships and forum set out in the SPD.

**Tony Evans**

## On this Day – 25<sup>th</sup> March 1947

What was Frederick Gibberd doing on the day the Harlow Master Plan was signed off?

In the file labelled Diary Notes etc 1946-1949 FG has written:

### March '47 **AM SIGNING THE MASTER PLAN FOR HARLOW**

April 47

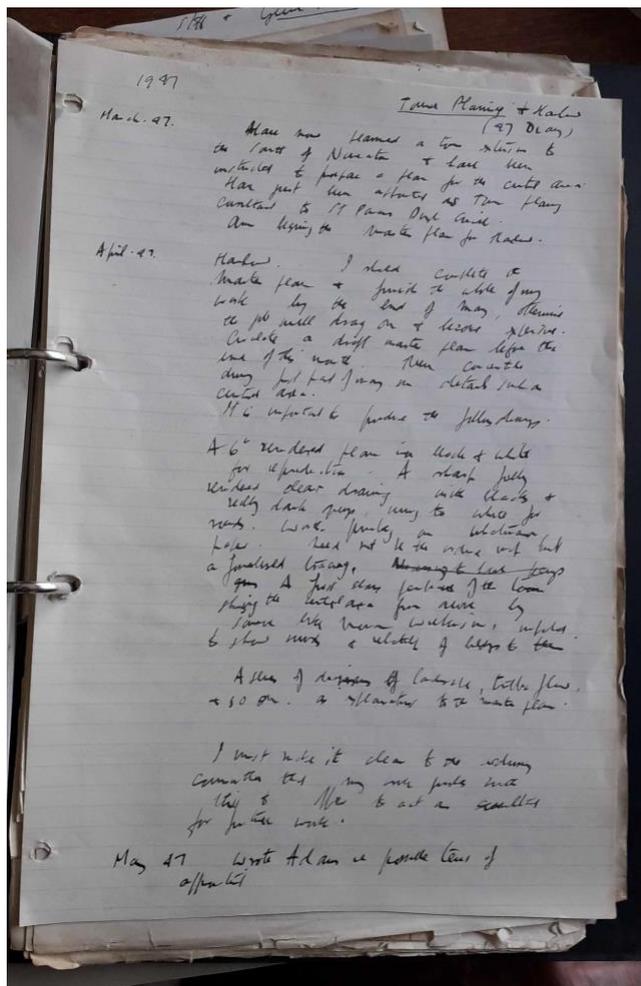
Harlow. I shall complete the matter and finish the whole of my work by the end of May. Otherwise the job will drag on and become extended. Circulate a draft Master Plan before the end of the month. Then concentrate during the first part of May in detail such as central area.

It is important to produce the following drawings.

A 6th rendered plan in black and white for reproduction. A sharp fully rendered clear drawing with black & mainly dark greys moving to white for roads.

Worth printing on Whatman paper.

Need not be the completed work but a finalised tracing. A first class feature of the town showing the central area from above – last 2 with Whifable (?)



Transcribed by **Moira Jones**, archivist of the Gibberd papers and longstanding member of Harlow Civic Society Committee.

## Midsummer Walk – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June

Our next walk, led again by John Curry, will be on Saturday 18th June. The walk, of about 3 miles will start and finish at Harlow Museum, Muskhams Road. Departing at 10.30am. All are welcome and there is no charge.

Our destination is Harlow Town Park via circuitous route that takes in some of the town's sculptures and historic buildings as well as the brilliant park, where refreshment can be taken.

On the return leg John Curry will be posing a question that has been puzzling him for some time; think Family Group locations!

We will return to the museum where, if we have enough energy left we can explore the delightful gardens and the excellent museum.

Car parking is available at the Museum. It is free but limited in capacity.

## **Time for Art – a reflection for the 75th year**

*Corrina Dunlea, together with Nick Bullions and Kelly Lean from the Council and a team of hard-working volunteers, engaged in the great Gibberd Gallery enterprise from the mid-twenties on. Here are Corrina's recollections of the glory years.*

It feels like a long, long time ago when I had the privilege of creating a strategy for what the Gibberd Gallery space could be, however it is not difficult to recall the outstanding moments. of which there were many. From my very large file of memories here is a brief review of my highlights.

### **All Alone Together – Nick Turvey**

Our First major show in 2014 was a bold, innovative and intergenerational project. It was a concept of 3 Bunkers, included fine art prints and a concealed interrogation room.



The final result was a truly community inclusive exhibition, different and raising many eyebrows, and smiles, the space was closed off as a building site for 2 weeks. 4 tonnes of material were brought to the Civic. Freaking out the facility team daily. Local firms trained people in brick laying, plastering and painting, sponsorship came from Denne construction, Wicks, Parndon Wood. Artists and performance groups gave their time to animate the opening and run workshops and talks. The private view attracted over 250 people. This was the renewal of Harlow Art Trust into the 21st Century.



### **The Lost Modernist – Michael O’Connell 2014**

Another enormous gathering of exhibits brought to us by a previous trustee’s connections. These forgotten works, intricate textiles, photographs and ceramics by Michael O’Connell was an emotional body of work to curate and present, especially to his distanced family.



Since his home was The Chase at Perry Green, prior to the Moore’s moving in next door, Mary Moore came over from Zurich to see it, after hearing about this from Jim Broadbent at a dinner party. Terrifyingly it was the day the baby’s face in the family group had been crayoned with blue wax and I bounced around in front of it like a crazed woman to distract her.

**Peter Randall Page** and his team were so humble helping curate his show in 2016 and only got nervous when a piece of his carved stone got stuck in the tradesman lift – it weighed 1 Tonne. When eventually it was installed, the show took my breath away and many others too, his assistant said to me that Peter had enjoyed working with us in Harlow more than anywhere else.

**'Through Their Eyes'**, the first portraiture show and demonstrations in Harlow with work from Royal Portrait Society award winners.

**Light, Art, Action** with stunning models and films from The British Theatre designers, and local dance troupes performed weekly throughout this show.



Langlands & Bell **MODE (L)S OF THOUGHT** displayed a stunning precise showcase of architectural pieces of their unseen works from 1979 – 2014 with prints and neon.

There are so many images from past works that grace my hard drive and looking back all of them brightened my days. We wanted to use the gallery in more innovative ways and encourage local artists to showcase their work. So, I made space for 7 exhibitions a year, and so out of the 30 plus shows my highlights include:

**'Lest we forget'** a 100 hand woven, silk poppies, a commemorative installation by Joanne Dennis with an integral sound piece by Nicola Hutchison.

The **Jazz** as artists see it exhibition with energetic paintings, sculpture, programmes and a curated saxophone loaned by John Graham.



All of the 5 **Harlow Opens**, winners of the Opens, Jackie Chakravarti, Graham Boyd, Anthony Cleynert and a special collaboration of works by Angela Godfrey and Alan Burgess.

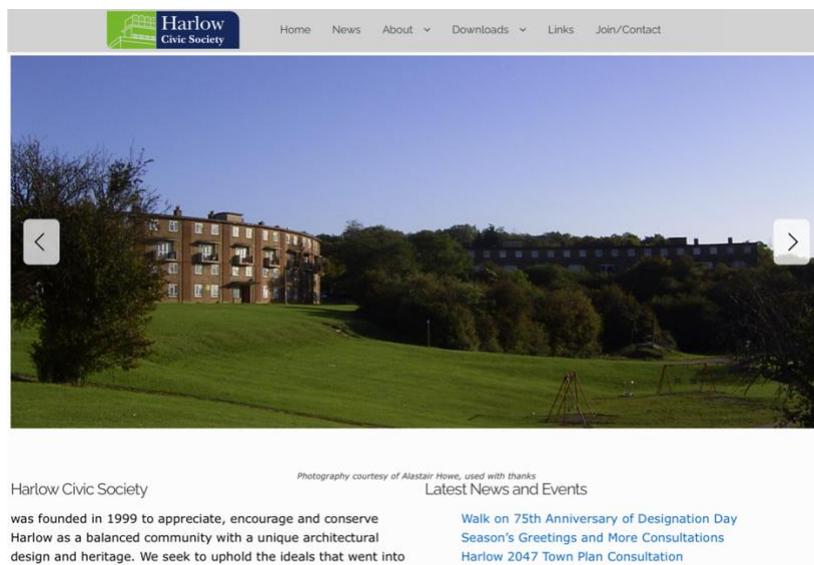
## Young curators exhibitions.

The first STAIR (Sculpture Town Artist in Residence) – Finn Thompson 2017

The 70th a showcase of cultural venues.

In my time up until 2018 I was constantly stimulated by working with these hundreds of people and my band of dedicated, skilled and passionate volunteers. They helped realise the vision for these impressive exhibitions, events, activities, workshops and tours. We had fun and I am proud to have given people some light in their lives by sharing other people's creative gifts.

## Corrina Dunlea May 2022



## Harlow Civic Society is Online

We are at:

<http://www.harlowcivicsociety.org.uk>

Please like us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/HarlowCivicSociety>

### Harlow Civic Society Committee

Tony Evans – Chair

Phil Hardcastle – Treasurer

Isobel Urquhart – Secretary

Barbara Burge – Press

All contributions to the Newsletter to Barbara Burge, [b\\_a\\_burge@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:b_a_burge@yahoo.co.uk)

**Harlow Civic Society welcomes new members. For information about joining contact the Treasurer by email at [contact@harlowcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:contact@harlowcivicsociety.org.uk) or use the contact form on our web site.**