

Archived by Wheathampstead
History Society from the website
compiled by the late Brian Joyce.

Wheathampstead Local History Group Looking back to 1953

At the time of the Jubilee Celebrations (2003) Ruth Jeavons looked back at 1953 with aid of local publications.

A Wheathampstead Coronation Party

Herts Advertiser & St Albans Times - Friday, August 7, 1953

"Tea and Pony Rides for 52 Caesar's Road Children"

A Coronation street party was held by the residents of **Caesar's Road**, Wheathampstead, on Saturday. The proceedings included a tea for **52 children**, at which the tables were gaily decorated. There was also a large iced cake, decorated with **5 red and gold crowns**, which was cut by **Mrs G. Milton**.

The programme included a **fancy-dress parade**, which attracted 28 entries, prize winners being: Prettiest costume: 1 **Shirley Dunham** ("Victorian lady"); 2 **Susan Figg** ("Princess Anne"); 3 **Diane Baker** ("Gay Bunting"). Most original costume: 1 **Barbara Curry** ("In the news"); 2 **Sally and Leslie Briggs** ("Jack and Jill"); 3 **Peter Curry** ("Roman soldier"). Most humorous costume 1 **Jimmy Ibbertson** ("The Dunce"); 2 **Sybil Hill** ("Coal Black Mammy"). The entrants were judged by **Mrs Cooper** and **Mrs Jarvis** of Colney Heath.

Following the tea, races were held for the children and other activities included **pony rides**, the pony having been lent by **Mr J. Wright**. The children were presented with **Coronation cups and saucers**. In the evening the adult residents of the road had their own celebrations, and there was dancing to the music of **Dick Cooper** and his band. The organising officials and committee members for the party were: Chairman, **Mrs E. Fossett**; Secretary, **Mrs F. Pattinson**, Treasurer, **Mrs C. Miller**; committee, **Mesdames J. Curry, D. Dunham, B. Figg, E. Flockton, M. Mayles, B. Watson, E. Wright** and **W. Swain**.

Other parties in the district were held at **Marford Road, Conqueror's Hill** and **Necton Road**.

Wheathampstead Garden Fete

Herts Advertiser & St Albans Times - Friday, August 7, 1953

Dramatic Society Event held in Ideal Setting

The first garden fete organised by members of the **Wheathampstead Dramatic Society** was held on Saturday in the grounds of the Rectory.

Over **200 people** enjoyed themselves in the lovely setting which was bathed in sunshine. The fete was in aid of the funds of the Memorial Hall and the Dramatic Society.

Mrs Hoskyns Abrahall, first President of the society, who formerly resided in the village, but now resides in London, opened the fete.

She said she had travelled to many parts of the world, and wherever she had found a small community of Britishers there always seemed to be a dramatic group of some kind. It was undoubtedly a good form of self-amusement and entertainment and a thing which should be encouraged to the full, especially among a younger generation, which, today, was so largely tending to turn to other and often more sinister activities. The local society had now been built up into a body which gave the village community some excellent entertainment three times a year, and it was up to those living in the area not to let the society die. It needed their support.

She considered a dramatic society a good thing in any community, if only for its educational qualities, and she urged those present to make their support to the local society real, by writing to the committee with suggestions as to what plays might be presented and as to how improvements, if any, might be made.

Performances enjoyed

The Harpenden ventriloquist "**Paddy**" **Paddison**, with the aid of his doll "Mike Arden", gave two performances which were enjoyed by children and adults.

There were also a number of sideshows and stalls and helpers on these included: Produce: **Mrs. C. Gregory**, **Mrs. H Parkinson**, **Mrs M. Roseblade** and **Miss C. Odell**: rifle range, **Mr R Bishop**; toys, **Mrs M. Bishop**; competitions **Mr C.D. Gregory**; hoop-la, **Miss B. Warren**; skittles, **Mrs E. Hobbs**; switchback **Dr. C.F.C. Parkinson**; "tip me out" **Robert Gregory** and **Ian Branham**; silhouettes, **Mr P. Collins** and **Miss C. Roe**. A model railway was operated by **Mr E. Hamilton**, assisted by members of the Luton District Society of Model Engineers. The stalls and sideshows were arranged by **Mr. L. Noblett**.

Refreshments were arranged by **Mrs L. Noblett** and **Mrs G. Soane** assisted by other helpers, and an ice-cream stall was run by **Miss A. Dawbarn**. **Major G. Warren** was announcer.

A dance was held in the senior school in the evening, organised by **Mr R Russell**. **Mr S. Collins** had charge of the lighting arrangements of the hall and music was provided by the **Tony Thatcher Group**, of Harpenden with **Miss Margaret Simms** as vocalist. **Mr C. Spurr** was M.C. Competitions were run by **Miss S. Roe**, and refreshments were arranged by **Mrs L. Noblett** and helpers.

Darby and Joan Club at Mackerye End

Herts Advertiser & St Albans Times, July 24 1953

The weekly meeting of Wheathampstead **Darby and Joan Club** on Monday was a special occasion. About **50 members** in two buses went to **Mackerye End** to visit **Mrs D. Cory-Wright**, look round the garden, and have tea in the marquee arranged in the walled garden. Accompanying the party were **Lady Daphne Grierson** (President), who voiced the old people's thanks to Mrs Cory-Wright. Tea was served under the direction of **Mrs Thornton**, and **Mrs Fossett** played the piano for community singing.

"Twelfth Night" at Wheathampstead Open-air Production in Rectory Garden

Herts Advertiser & St Albans Times, July 24 1953

...Following their magnificent presentation of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in 1951, friends of Wheathampstead parish church, in conjunction with members of the local dramatic society, presented a second production, "**Twelfth Night**", in the garden of the **Rectory**. The first performance took place on Thursday of last week. The beautiful grounds, with their many trees forming leafy glades and bowers, lent untold atmosphere to the presentation two years ago, and I felt interested to see how a play not set in the surroundings in which it was being presented would come over to the audience.

Hit the top line

The production again hit the top line, and was in every way comparable with its predecessor. Right from the opening speech .. "If music be the food of love, play on," spoken by Orsino, Duke of Illyria to the equally famous and lilting song, "The Wind and the Rain" sung at the close by Feste ... the play held the members of the audience, which was of pleasing proportions, in rapt attention.

The play was produced by the Rector, (**Rev. G.H.E.T. Roe**) who himself played the part of the Duke Orsino. He was his usual confident self. He must be congratulated for his work of casting the rest of the players.

Youthful dignity

Elizabeth Sleigh, as Olivia, the Countess, carried herself with becoming yet delightfully youthful dignity. Viola, the part played by **Elizabeth Hart**. Here was perhaps the outstanding performance of the evening... earned enthusiastic applause for her acting on several occasions. As Feste the jester **Humphrey Moreton** also gave a performance which earned much applause. Hilarity was provided by the comedy couple, Sir Toby Belch (**Peter Collins**) and Sir Andrew Aguecheek (**Charles Howard**). Assisting the producer behind the scenes were **Mary Long** assistant producer; **Jean Paterson** and **Mary Long** wardrobe mistresses; and **Sam Collins**, lighting.

The play was performed in aid of the village school maintenance and rebuilding fund. Other performances were given on Friday and Saturday.

Topics of the Week - Coming-out Party

Herts Advertiser & St Albans Times, 24 July 1953

Mackerye End, the delightful home of **Mr and Mrs Douglas Cory-Wright** must have provided a mellow background for many outstanding occasions during its long history, but few could have been more gay than the **coming-out party** held for **Miss Cleone Cory-Wright** on Saturday.

While the charming house with its warm cream walls reflecting the colours of enormous bowls of flowers, gave its own peculiar atmosphere to the occasion, the garden had also been adapted to play its part. A **special dance floor** had been laid down in the walled garden, where sweet peas and other climbing plants provided a natural "wallpaper".

Chinese lanterns in the shape of **parrots** nodded from the trees in the orchards, a buffet was laid out in the **rose gardens**, and everywhere fairy lights glimmered, and floodlighting enhanced the beauty of the herbaceous border and silhouetted the boles of the trees, including the famous 500 year-old tulip tree.

Gipsy orchestra

A gipsy orchestra playing at the dance floor at the edge of the wood on another dance floor flanked by a beer garden provided for those who favoured **Viennese waltzes**.

About **70 of this season's debutantes** attended the dance at which there were **200 guests**. For the dance **Miss Cleone Cory-Wright** wore a mist-white tulle crinoline dress with a spray of delphiniums over one shoulder, and her sister, **Miss Marigold Cory-Wright** wore an unusual gown of gold and scarlet fashioned from a sari brought from India. **Mrs Cory-Wright** also wore a crinoline in a becoming shade of blue-grey taffeta.

Lamer Park

Herts Advertiser & St Albans Times, 24 July 1953

The Lamer Park estate, Wheathampstead, which is to be offered for sale by Connell and Silkstone, is very well known in a much wider field than its immediate vicinity.

Held by John de la Mare in the early part of the **14th century**, the property was in the hands of **Sir William Roche**, Lord Mayor of London in the reign of **Henry VIII**. Thereafter the estate passed to various owners until **1617**, when it was acquired by **John Garrard**. From that time it was held by connections of the Garrard family, one of whom was with the Scott expedition to the South Pole, until 1948, when it was purchased by the late **Mr Grenville Hill**.

Demolished

In **1761** the old Tudor manor was **demolished** by **Sir Benet Garrard** and was rebuilt. An early 17th century archway, originally the main entrance to the Tudor House, now forms the entrance to the walled kitchen gardens. The main portion of the residence was partially demolished by the late **Mr Grenville Hill** and a new modern residence is being completed. A **bell dated 1717** and inscribed "Sir Samuel Garrard - his bell" stands in the rear courtyard.