

Proceed to Summerhouse Lane and **The Hall (10)** is on the right. Originally a 17th century house, it was rebuilt during the 18th century. It contains some early half-timbered work in the kitchens, although this is only visible from the interior. Until the 1960s the gardens occupied the whole area now covered by the housing estate and contained some magnificent trees. The southern aspect of the house is typically Georgian, it possibly had some ecclesiastical connections during its early days. Note the mud-scraper at the front door - a reminder of unmade roads. Further down on the left is **The Grange (11)**, a grand house which bears the date 1675 on the west wall over the main door. It contains original panelling and fireplaces and has a fine staircase with heavily turned balusters. Notice the hipped roof, typical of the period. To the south of the house, and visible from outside the south garden wall, is a conservatory possibly built in the 19th century - it has a look of Paxton about it. Again, the gardens originally covered the area where houses now stand. The walk between the two properties was at one time enclosed by a seven foot high wall; it now leads to the recreation ground. The Grange was once the home of the Collins family who owned the famous music hall and theatre of varieties, Collins Music Hall at Islington Green, London (opened 1862 closed 1958). Miss Collins, who lived here until her death in the late 1930s, had the adjacent house to the north, 'Fir Tree Cottage', built for her gardener, to replace the previous gardener's cottage. This stood to the right facing the house and although condemned, was still occupied until the 1950s.

Retrace your steps back to the village and turn left. The building on your left, known as **The Gables (12)**, is a fine example of basic Gothic Revival. It has altered very little since it was built and was the village bakery and coal depot until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For many years one could see the hoisting wheel protruding from the gable on the eastern side of the building.

Across the road stands **The Five Bells Public House (13)**. This is possibly 17th century, but much altered. The parapet is conspicuous and the roof of red clay tiles, so characteristic of the district, is very noticeable. To the rear of the building is the village pound (where stray cattle used to be rounded up), which is now the Scouts' hut.

Look through the gate to the west and you will see **The Manor House (14)**. The original Elizabethan half-timbered, doubled-gabled building was demolished in 1774 and the present one, solidly 19th century, was built a little to the north-west of the former building.

Go now into the churchyard of **St Mary's Church (15)**, but before entering the church find the grave of Richard Cox, the retired brewer who developed the famous 'Cox's Orange Pippin' apple. Return to the main door of the church and look at the windows on the right. The easternmost window of the chancel has interesting figures carved on the window edges - possibly representing the reigning monarch at the time of its reconstruction (Henry VI or VII) and his wife.

Go along to the door and on the right you will find an early mass dial, unlike a sundial it showed the times of services. The dial was obviously in use before the porch was added and indeed before the trees were planted, as it requires maximum sun to achieve its function; the gnomon (pointer) has long since gone. It is worth visiting the Church, which may be open and a guide book will be available. If you look at the outside you will see the Georgian cupola on top of the tower. The upper part of the tower is Tudor (notice the size of the bricks); the lower section is flint, possibly 12th century. The door inside the porch is the church's finest feature - Norman, in three orders and fascinatingly carved. The inner arch has rosettes and knots, the middle has strange beakheads, and the outer is zigzagged. The new church hall to the north harmonizes very well with the ancient building. A glance over the wall will show you one of the most wonderful architectural sights in the district: it is **The Great Barn (16)** built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is 191 feet long and 38 feet wide, making it the largest barn in Middlesex. Please see the leaflet entitled The Great Barn at Harmondsworth for further details. Stroll back to the village green and turn right into the older part of the village. There are no houses of merit with the exception of the Old Village School, but a walk to the river will reveal interesting earthworks to the right, possibly the remains of a Benedictine Priory and the spring of 'Our Lady's Tears', also a fine view of the church and barn through the trees. The river is crossed by a finely-constructed brick bridge called Dukes Bridge. This is the Duke of Northumberland's River and is artificial: it was cut from the River Colne a few yards further



Harmondsworth Tithe Barn and St Mary's Church

upstream by the Duke himself to supply water for the fountains at Syon House. The land beyond the river is known as Harmondsworth Moor.



## Harmondsworth Village



Price 30p

# Harmondsworth History Trail

Compiled by Douglas Rust

This leaflet is one of two leaflets to show the rich history of the village of Harmondsworth by detailing the history of the many ancient buildings still standing. The second leaflet covers the Great Barn at Harmondsworth. The trail in the village is quite short and will take approximately 45 mins. Parking in the village is adequate. For those using public transport the U3 bus from Ruislip, Uxbridge and Heathrow stops in Harmondsworth.

Harmondsworth - Hermodesworde in the Domesday Book (1086) - probably means 'Heremod's farm'. From 1389 until 1544 it belonged to the College of St Mary at Winchester; it then became part of Hampton Court Chase and the royal hunting ground. The lands were later sold piecemeal and by the time of the Enclosures (1816) most of the parish was farmed by individual farmers, though certain parts were still in the possession of the Crown.

As a village Harmondsworth has altered very little since the expansive building boom of the 1920s and 1930s, most of which took place on open fields and orchards. The most traumatic change has been the construction of Heathrow Airport, which not only brought considerable noise and added more traffic to the narrow Hatch Lane, but completely obliterated the hamlet of Heathrow, a small village within the parish. The M4 motorway, whilst not affecting the centre of the village, has also been a contributory factor in increasing traffic through the parish. Fortunately the village is a 'no-through road', and apart from extensive car parking around the Green which can never be quite explained, it is a fairly secluded residential village. Transport it to Kent or Worcestershire and it would be idyllic

The trail starts at the Green. Known to older residents as the 'Memorial Green', it was laid out during the 1920s as a memorial to the men who died in the Great War. It was to have had a war memorial on it, but this never materialized. However, a gun was brought back from the battlefields of France and placed on the Green; whereupon it was promptly removed by some of the returned warriors and ignominiously dumped in a corner of the recreation ground. It lay there until the beginning of the Second War, when it was finally taken for scrap.

On the north side of The Green is **The Sun House (1)**. Although much altered it is the oldest residential property in the village built during the 16th century. It was half-timbered until the 19th century and still retains the main timber frame, now concealed within the brickwork. In 1586 it was granted by Queen Elizabeth in trust for the 'perpetual maintenance of obits (memorial services), lights, lamps and so forth in the

church of Harmondsworth'. It was a public house until 1912 and a butcher's shop until much later. Remnants of the inn sign support may still be seen on the wall, and the hooks for carrying the joints of meat can be seen at the eastern end of the building.

Walk in an easterly direction and on your left you will see **The Vicarage (2)**. This is a fine Victorian building dating from 1845. Not only does its size indicate the wealth of the parish at the time, but also the size of the families which vicars had in those days. To the west of the Vicarage may be seen a mulberry tree which is probably two or three hundred years old and still alive. It was used during the 1800s to make mulberry wine to cure the aches and pains of the poor people of the village.

Beyond the Vicarage, notice a wall containing a 'foundation stone'. It is here that the original Village Hall stood. The next house, **Howcroft (3)**, is a well-proportioned Victorian frontage on a much earlier farm building; the windows have been replaced and altered. A few yards further on we come to **The Forge (4)**, an 18<sup>th</sup> century building built with local bricks known as 'reds', but completely altered inside. This was a working blacksmith's forge until the late 1940s, when most of the local farm horses were finally replaced by machinery.

The next house on the same side of the road is **Acacia House (5)**. A few years ago it had an interesting covered way from the pavement to the front door; the frontage is early Victorian. Proceeding eastwards, the next property is **The Close (6)**. This building replaced an earlier farmhouse destroyed during the great fire of Harmondsworth in 1884. A small 17<sup>th</sup> century building stands to the east of this property. It was a half-timbered cottage until a flying bomb fell near by during the summer of 1944. It was then clad in asbestos as an emergency repair but has since been restored. The exterior chimney is a typical feature of early cottages as a safety measure because of the original thatched roof.

With modern developments destroying so many of our fine buildings, it is a real pleasure to look across the road and see **The Lodge (7)**. This is a fine early 19th century house that had some of the loveliest gardens to be found anywhere in the district. The house was allowed to fall into complete disrepair during the 1960s when the property was unoccupied and there was even a fear that it was likely to be demolished. However, an enterprising development company acquired it a few years ago and they have restored it to very much its original glory. Notice the finely proportioned bay windows on the west side and the grand door to the north. Some old farm cottages may be seen along the side of the road to the junction of Hatch Lane. These were lived in until 1939 and have a cast iron pillar in the centre for supporting the upper storey. They housed Italian prisoners of war during the 1939-45 conflict.

**The Baptist Chapel (8)** on the other side of Hatch Lane was another reconstruction after the fire. The finance was put up by Mr. Wild of Sipson a very benevolent and successful mar-



ket gardener whose family carried on the business until a few years ago. Until the late 1930s it would have been quite noticeable to the observer that the eastern end of the village contained more substantial buildings (built of brick with slate roofs) than the western end which was predominantly wattle and daub, half-timbered and with tiled roofs. Most of the latter buildings were however demolished just before the 1939-45 war as part of a slum clearance programme. The reason for the contrast was that the great fire destroyed virtually all the eastern half of the village and the obvious rebuilding material was brick which was then being made locally. Slate was also now available as a result of the opening of the Great Western Railway line to South Wales. Proceed now in a westerly direction going back into the village and you will notice a row of houses that were originally constructed behind a high brick wall. These were designed by a local architect, Hubert Bateman, and built during the 1920s. They were designed as 'sun-trap' houses, with all the living rooms to the south and the services to the north. Their character has been altered since as a result of openings cut into the walls.

Just past these houses you will notice a pillar with the word 'Cambridge' on it. This is all that remains of the gateway to a large house that stood on the site of the present Cambridge Close. The other pillar had 'House' on it, but was demolished to make way for the road.

**The Crown Public House (9)** is an 18th century building, altered at the front but containing early brickwork in its corbels and also to the rear. The building formerly extended further south than it does now, but most of this part was demolished during the slum clearance mentioned above. The building has a parapet, a typical feature of all public buildings built in the London area after the Great Fire of London in 1666, the idea being that firemen could get up on the roof to extinguish any blaze. The wall had an insurance fire mark on it for many years although most of it has now vanished.