



1. 2 Southdown Road.

Tucked in behind the Harpenden Arms, this is one of Harpenden's oldest houses. By chance in the 1970s it was discovered to have been part of a mediaeval hall-house. The stream from the High Street ran in front of the cottage, crossed by a footbridge in the C19.



2 Harpenden Public Halls –

opened in 1938, to replace what is now Park Hall. The main hall is dedicated in memory of Eric Morecambe, a Harpenden resident from 1960- 1984.



3. Harpenden Hall – The gabled

end dates from the late C16 with a C17 wing alongside. It was known as Blakesleys until the early C19. Several times it was used as a school; also as a private lunatic asylum in the C19. It became Harpenden Urban District Council offices from 1931 until 1974, then Town Council offices, until sold as private offices.



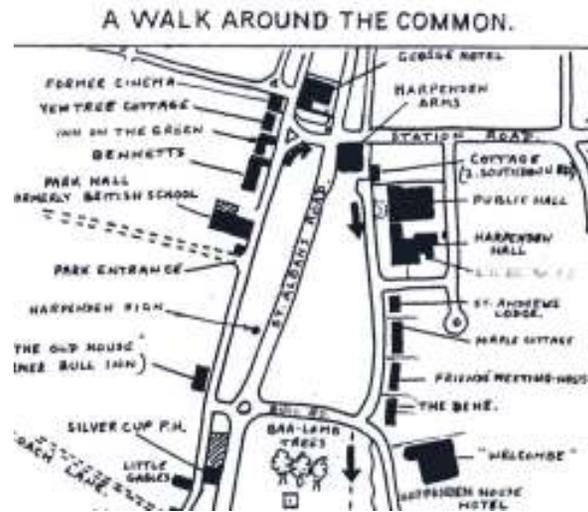
4. Mr Hodgson's cottages - built

in 1879 by Henry Tylston Hodgson of the Welcombe (see 7). They were 'two-up, two-down' workers' dwellings with wash-houses and privies at the back and water supply from wells and rainwater cisterns. The windows have cast iron frames.



5. Friends Meeting

House – built in 1887 as premises for Harpenden Lecture Institute (founded 1858). It was a military hospital staffed by V.A.D. nurses in WWI. Refurbished in 1933 for the Society of Friends. Pictured in 1972 before the porch was enlarged.



Harpenden Common was part of the Manor of Rothamsted. In 1901 the western parts were made over to the Harpenden Urban District Council by Sir Charles Lawes. The remaining Manorial Rights were purchased, with the help of a donation, for the people of Harpenden in 1935. Used for grazing sheep till the early half of C20, it was ploughed for crops in WWII. The Statty Fair in September moved to the Triangle when it outgrew Church Green



6

The Dene – little is known about this C18 house, which was described in 1799 as "James Floyd's dwelling with shop attached".



OR



7. Welcombe – C18 frontage with traces of earlier timber-framed building and Victorian additions. For nearly fifty years until his death in 1918 it was the home of Henry Tylston Hodgson, Deputy Chairman of the Midland Railway and a Harpenden benefactor, who added substantial C19 wings. It housed St Dominic's Convent School from 1931 to 1964, and was then converted to Harpenden Moat House – now Harpenden House - Hotel.



8 Coach Lane Cottage,

formerly Gable End Farm, a C17 timber-framed structure, with entry porch and northern wing added in the early C20.



9 Silver Cup Public House –

built in 1838 by John House, brewer, of Wheathampstead, using local flints in mortar on the wall facing Leyton Road. Photo with the Archer family in 1890s. The Silver Cup was presumably one of the prizes for Harpenden Races. In 1931 a wine license was granted, to meet increasing demand from motorists, attracted by the Common.



10. Fire Station – site of

Heathfield works - Field's Hat Factory, Abbot, Anderson and Abbot's oilskins. Fire Station moved from British School site (See 13)



11. The Old House, 27 Leyton

Road, dates from Tudor times, with later additions. It was The Bull Inn until 1860 and since then a private house. The landlord from about 1830 was Henry Oldaker, a keen huntsman and former landlord at the Cross Keys. He organised regular annual race meetings on the Common from 1848. Racing continued until 1914.



12. Rothamsted Park gates and

drive were constructed and the avenue of lime trees planted in 1880 by the Lord of the Manor, Sir John Bennet Lawes. Hitherto the main drive to the Manor House had been from Hatching Green. In 1938 the Rothamsted Estate sold 53 acres of parkland to the Council as a public park. The wrought iron gates were taken for salvage in WWII.



13 Park Hall – Built in 1850 as the British School on land donated by Sir J B Lawes of Rothamsted Manor. The school moved to purpose built premises in Victoria Road in 1898, and Park Hall became the offices and Public Hall for the newly formed Harpenden Urban District Council. The Fire Brigade occupied the adjoining classroom block. The Town Council redeveloped the rear part of the schools as the new Town hall in 1994. The Local History Centre is housed in a small room at the front of Park Hall.



14. Bennetts (Royal British Legion since 1959) – A much-modified C17 timber-framed building with modern extensions, belonging formerly to the Rothamsted estate. John Bennet Lawes senior lived here in the early C19 and built the stables (The Bean Tree) for stabling the Prince Regent's horses when he visited for the local hunt. A convalescent home in 1915.



15. Inn on the Green – a row of C18 cottages. Home of Henry Salisbury in early C20 before he moved his business to Kingston House, 6 High Street. Became the Mary-Ellen Tearoom until the 1970s, when it was redeveloped (twice) as a pub.



16. Yew Tree Farm – C17 timber-framed structure with C19 additions – one of the four farms in the village centre, with farmyard buildings at the corner of Leyton Green. These were demolished when Harpenden's first cinema (The White Palace) was built in 1913, with foyer facing Leyton Road (now Snips and Dental surgery). The auditorium now converted into Strada on Leyton Green.



The Society was founded in 1973 as an independent offshoot of the Harpenden Society, with the aim of researching and recording the town's history and heritage, and stimulating further interest in the town's fascinating past. It now has a thriving membership of over 200. As well as having the opportunity to attend the Society's regular meetings and exhibitions, members also receive a thrice-yearly newsletter containing articles of interest on local history topics beyond those covered by Society events.

How to join:

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More information about Harpenden Common can be found on our website:
www.harpenden-history.org.uk

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TOWN TRAIL No. 2

Around the Common



The Baa Lamb trees as seen by local artists

Starting at 2 Southdown Road,
behind the Harpenden Arms, and
returning to Yew Tree Farm
(Prezzo restaurant)