

Harpenden Society, 7 December 2017

The story of the New Public Halls

by Gavin and Rosemary Ross
Harpenden and District
Local History Society

Proclamation in 1911 outside the Public Hall



Harpenden Hall gardens from the Common
when it was St Dominic's Convent in the 1920s



Hall and portion of grounds. Dominican Convent, Harpenden Hall. Harpenden.

Harpenden Hall gardens, from Arden Grove



Proclamation 1936 outside Harpenden Hall



2 Southdown Road in the 1920s

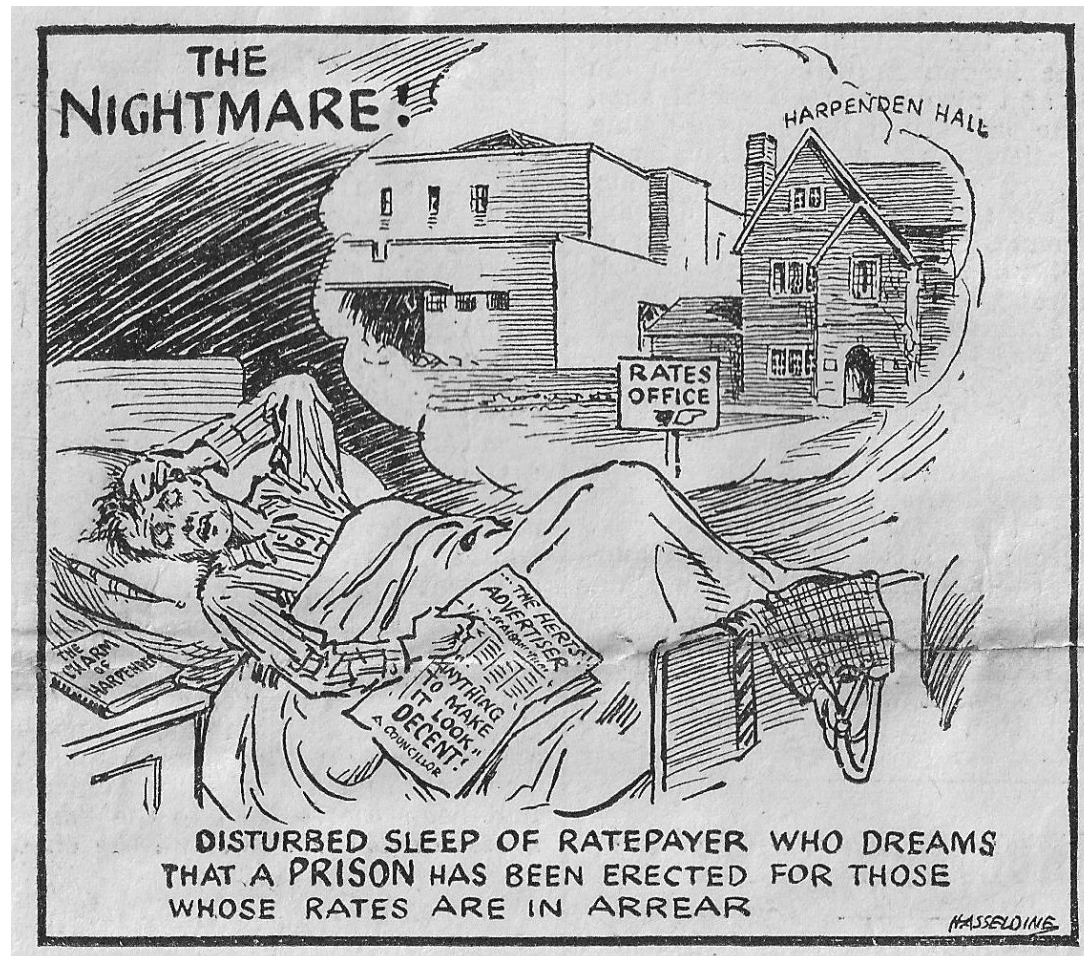


Nearing completion, April 1938



[*"Herts Advertiser"* Photo.
The New Public Hall, nearing completion.

Ernest Hasseldine's nightmare



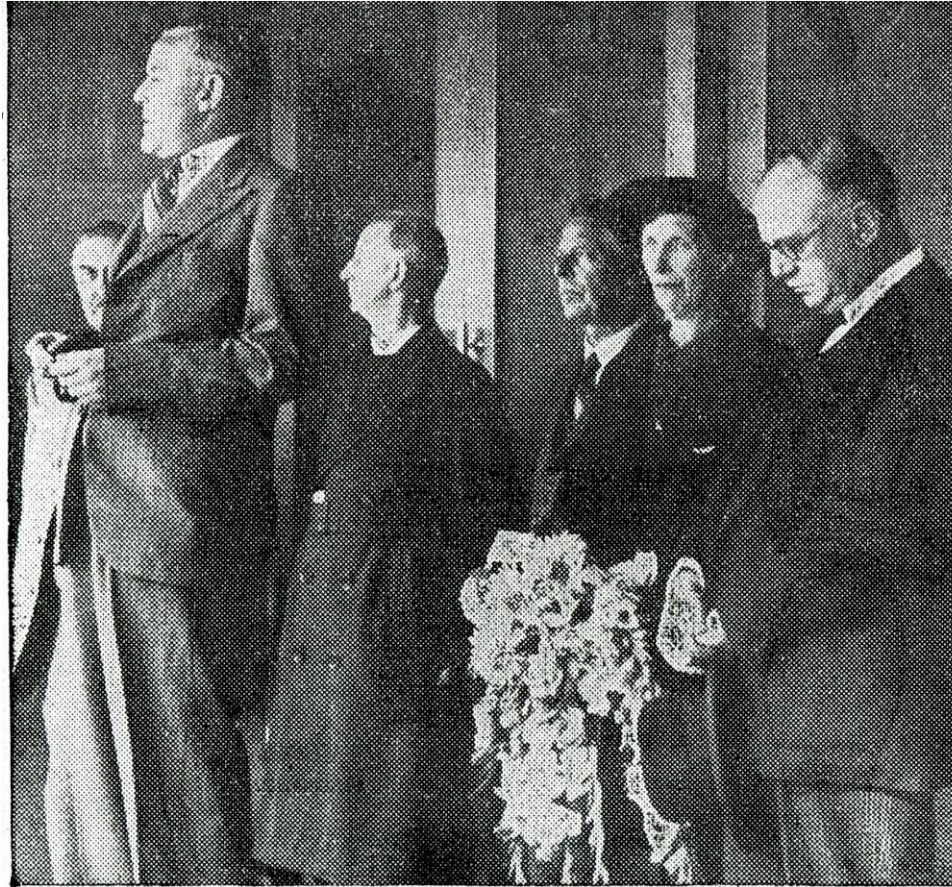
Ready for opening –
September 1938



Finishing touches



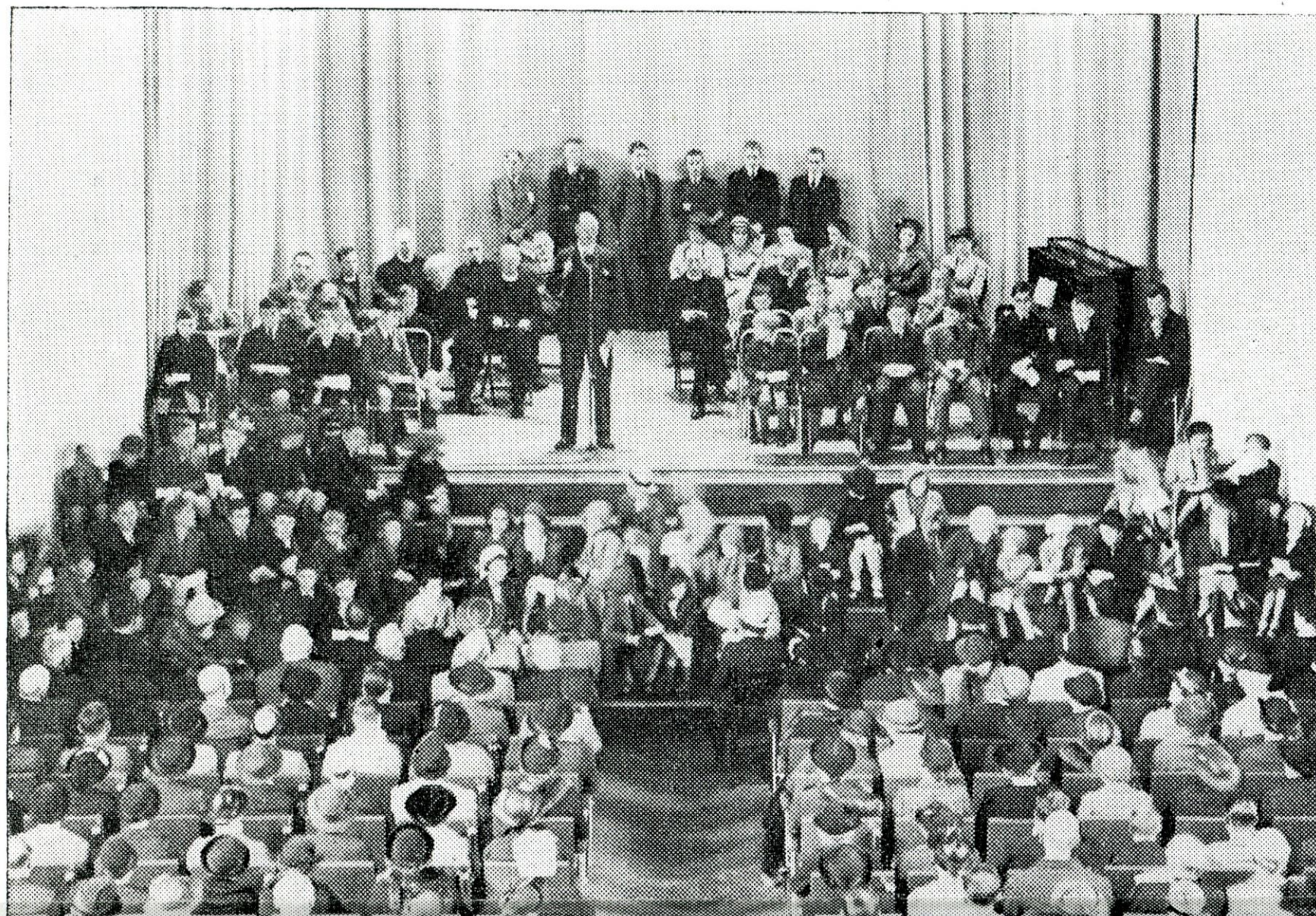
The opening ceremony, 3 pm on 28 September 1938



— [“*Herts Advertiser*” Photo
Mr. Taylor addressing the gathering.

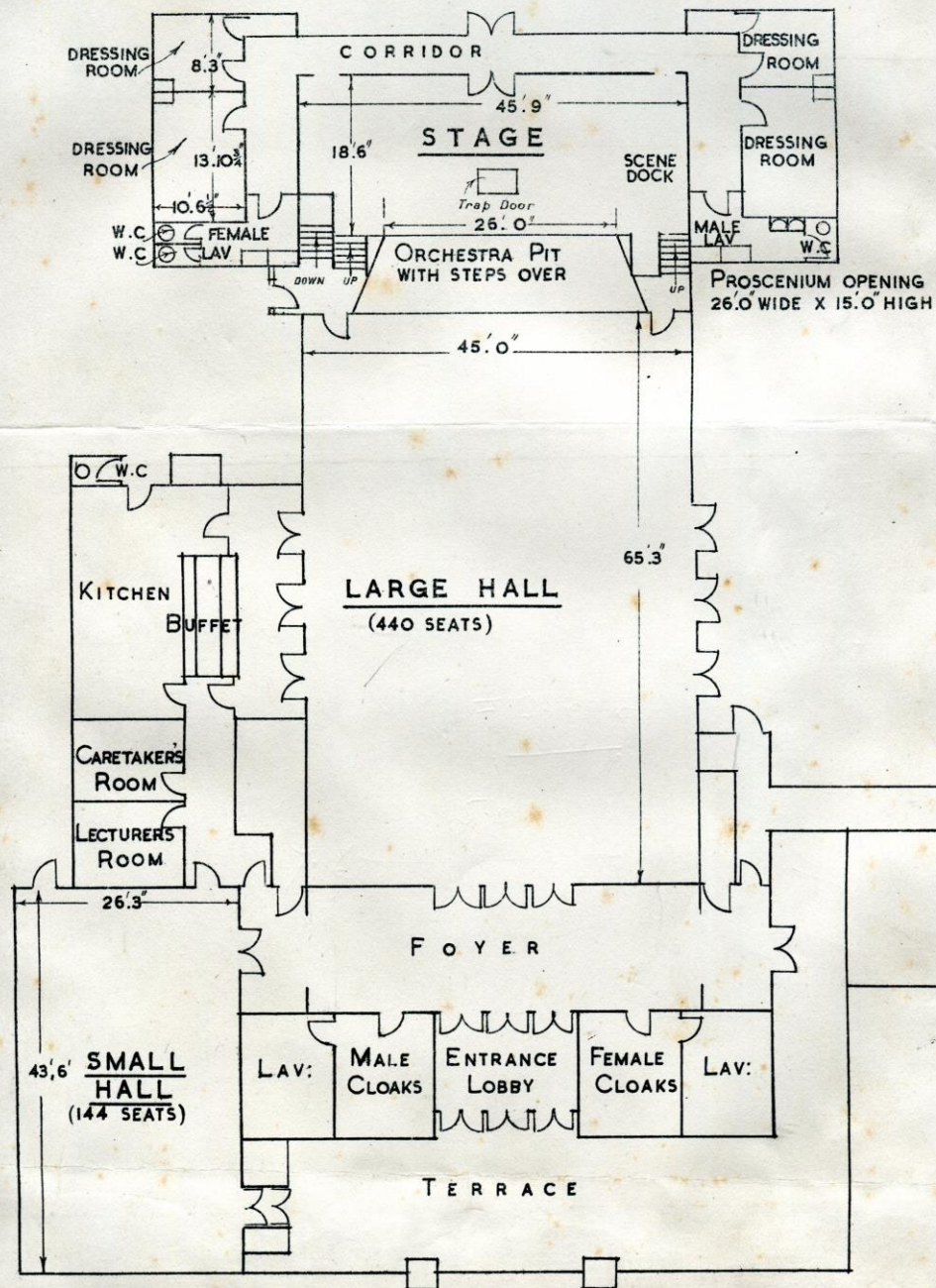
Dancers at the Venetian Masked Ball, held at the new Public Hall, Harpenden, on Friday, in aid of "The Red House" appeal which is for the development of hospital and nursing services in the town.

THANKSGIVING FOR PEACE



Low walls – a hazard in the blackout - 1942





Sample page from February 1939

1	274 3	Barnfield Lawn Tennis Club.	Dance to 1.30 Whist Drive 7-11
2	23 241	Catholic Action	Dance
3	289	Luton Amateur Dramatic Soc	Theatricals
4	219 14	British Legion	Dance Mr. A. P. Nowood Lecture 3-7
5	260	Y. P. S. S.	
6			
7	20	Girls Friendly Soc	Social 7- 10.30
8	235 242 245	Harpenden Photographic Soc Watford ex. Gas boy. St. Mary's Mission	Preparation Demonstration Whist Drive
9	235	Harpenden Photographic Soc	Meeting
10	235	Harpenden Photographic Soc	Meeting
11	235 29	Harpenden Photographic Soc Mrs Lukyn	Meeting Bridge Drive 7-11
12	260	Y. P. S. S.	
13			
14	16	Harpenden Badminton Club.	Dance to 1.15

Sample page from October 1941

<i>October</i>		1941.	PUBLIC H	
DATE	BOOKING VOUCHER NO.	NAME OF HIRER		PURPOSE
		LARGE HALL	SMALL HALL	
1	369.	Mr. A. Nicholson	—	Dance to midn
2	358.	London & Luton Dance Entertainers	—	Dance to midn
3	386.	Harpender Branch - National Children's Home & Orphanage	—	Evening concert (1st)
4	329.	Ravenscroft Inn's Club	—	Dance to midn
S5				
6	388.	H.Q. - Eastern Command	—	Hoops concert. (full stage)
7	380	Harpender Group - British Drama League	—	Rehearsal.
8	369.	Mr. A. Nicholson	—	Dance to midn
9	383.	Lt. Rogers.	—	Dance to midn
10	356	Miss Bartlett (A.T.S.)		Dance - 7.30
11	318. 350.	Mr. Gerald Brown * Alteration agreed at F.C. meeting 6.10.41.		* Dance to midn Dance - 7.30
S12	415.	Lt. Rogers - R.C.S.	—	Hoops concert
13	388. 315.	H.Q. - Eastern Command Harpender Group - British Drama League (transferred to 7/10/41.)	—	Hoops concert (full stage)
14	315.	do (Drama League)		Rehearsal.

Initial scale of charges - 1938

Dances to midnight	£4/10/-	Piano	10/-
Dances to 2 a.m.	£5/10/-		
Meetings to 10 p.m.	£2/10/-		
Concerts	£3/10/-	Piano	7/6
Theatricals	Rehearsals £2	First Night	£4/10/-
Bazaars	£5	Preparations	£2
Boxing Entertainments	£4		
Bridge and Whist Drives	£3/15/-		
Charges for breakages	Tea cups 6d	Jugs 1/6	Spoons 6d

First increase, 1944 Dances £5/10/- Concerts £4/10/-
 From 1946 Dances £6/10/- Meetings £3

Inflation rate 1938-2017 60 times, approx.

Net income from bookings

Financial year	Income £
1938-39	629
1939-40	658
1940-41	656
1941-42	1206
1942-43	1149
1944-45	1467
1945-46	1527
1946-47	1635

Dance Organisers

- 1938 Barnfield Tennis Club, Bamville Cricket Club, Elliswick Tennis, Rugby Club, Rovers FC, BH Dance Club, Vauxhall Engineering, Oaklands Old Students, British Legion, St Mary's Mission
- 1941 Shepherd & Co, Lt McGuire, Sgt Childs, Lt Stephens, British Legion, Royal Corps Signals, Brigade Sgt Major Levens, Mrs Brown, Harpenden Police Force (D V Baulk), Capt Stephens, Royal Engineers, Comforts Fund
- 1946 Good Companions, Cobra Club, Boy Scouts Assn, British Legion, Harpenden Rovers, War Office Wireless Station, Church Schools Appeal, Sgt Childs, S Beds Young Farmers, Old Comrades Assn, Home Guard Assn, Harpenden Girls Training Corps

Fire Brigade's Dance

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1938

THE HERTS

Dancing at Harpenden



Some of the Company at the Fire Brigade Dance.

[“Herts Advertiser” Photo.]

Theatrical Bookings

- 1938-9 Drama League, WJ Busby, Luton Amateur Dramatic Socy, National Childrens Home, W Watkins, S Harpenden W.I., Catholic Action Committee
- 1941 Royal Ulster Rifles, Bombadier Ingram, British Drama League, Co-operative Society, Mrs Veale, Mrs H Salisbury, NK Bowers, War Savings Committee
- 1946 Army Benevolent Fund, Drama League, Harpenden Comforts Fund, Community Theatre Movement, Harpenden Auxiliary Hospital

Miscellaneous Bookings

- 1938 Watford and St Albans Gas Co demonstrations
- 1939 Harpenden Arts Society exhibitions
- August 1939 4 Wedding Receptions
- October 1940 Use of Hall for Refugees (several days)
- February 1942 Harpenden Home Guard Social and Smoking Concert
- May 1942 Civil Defence Instructional Film (F Gingell)
- April 1944 Civil Defence Emergency Cooking Demonstration
- September 1946 Public Meeting on Diphtheria Immunisation

Bookings 1938-1942

	Oct-June 39	1940	1941	1942
Dances	46	74	126	106
Theatricals	6	9	12	6
Concerts, Films	16	4	32	56
Meetings	34	17	24	39
Weddings, Socials	21	8	3	5
Exhibitions	17		1	
Games, Boxing	8	3	5	7

Most bookings cancelled autumn 1939, except 4 weddings in August

Fire brigade dinners & whist drives 1938-39

HARPENDEN FIRE BRIGADE



Some of the Company at Dinner.

[*"Herts Advertiser"* Photo.]



FIREMEN'S WHIST DRIVE.—Players at Harpenden Fire Brigade Whist Drive, in the new Public Hall.

First full production by Harpenden Drama League

6/9f



*The Harpenden Group
of the British Drama League*
PRESENTS
**IAN HAY'S
HOUSEMASTER**
A Comedy in Three Acts
at the
NEW PUBLIC HALL
THURSDAY, FRIDAY and SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 17th, 18th and 19th, 1938
at 8.15 p.m. each Evening

CAST INCLUDES—

JOAN BARRATT	BARBARA WILLIAMS	J. LLOYD LAWRENCE
WINIFRED GARNER	SYDNEY F. BARRATT	RONALD MALING
RUTH MALING	DUDLEY BOUGHILL	DUDLEY PERKINS
JOAN VEALE	ERNEST BRADING	PETER RANDALL
MOLLIE VEALE	MICHAEL DOBLE	MALCOLM SAVILLE
		ROBERT WILLIAMS

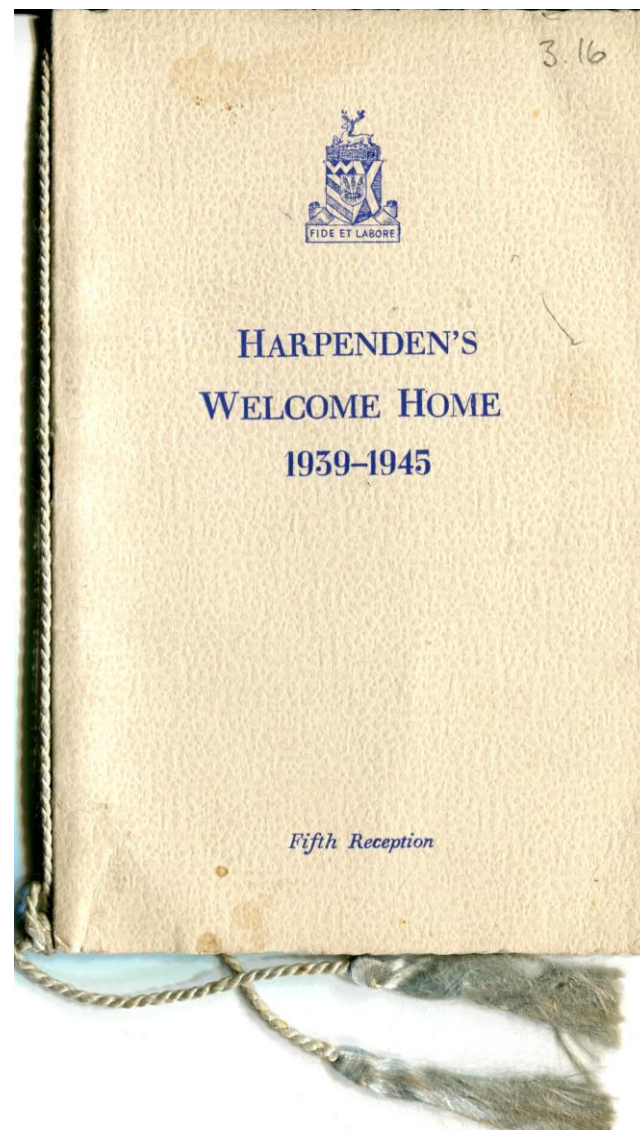
Produced by REGINALD WEST

TICKETS may be obtained from W. H. Smith & Son, Ltd., High Street,
Harpenden.

Prices 3/6 and 2/- Reserved; 1/- Unreserved (including Tax). Club or
School Parties of 12 or more half price on Thursday on application to the
Hon. Secretary, Treveda, Fallows Green, Harpenden. (Phone 588.)

Victory celebrations – 1945-46

"V-DAY" Baby Show. Public Hall
 2-4.5 pm for 3 pm. June 8th
 For Harpenden Babies Only
 age groups
 Class A 1-month - 6 months
 B 6 " - 12 "
 C 12 " 2 yrs.
 Three Prizes for every group. £1, 10/- 5/- value
 Judges from St Albans all Nations
 1. Miss Gordon. "Sisters Hospital"
 2. Miss Hankin. "Bricket House"
 3. Miss Parfitt. St A + Mid Herts Hospital
 organisers Com. Mrs Harold Raban
 assisted by " Mrs Burgin Mrs Busby
 + helpers. Mesdames. Putterill, J E
 Salisbury, West. Worsam, Walker
 Sheraton, ^{Mrs} Martin. Cole.
 Tea will be provided for Matrons
 + transport to + from St A. + visitors
 (Mrs Busby + Mrs Burgin)



Harpenden Chamber of Trade dinner, March 1949

Menu

Ox Tail Soup



Roast Chicken

Baked and Boiled Potatoes

Greens in Season



Cream Gateaux and Ice Cream

or

Fruit and Ice Cream



Coffee



Licensed Bar 7.30—11 p.m.

Programme

Toast—THE KING

Mr. A. H. Akhurst,

President, Harpenden & District Chamber of Trade.



Entertainer—Leslie Norman,

Comedian Entertainer



Toast—THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF TRADE

Mr. A. H. Akhurst.

Response—Mr. J. W. Stevenson

Deputy Secretary, National Chamber of Trade



Entertainer—Charles Redgrave

Ukelele Entertainer and Specialty Dancer



Toast—LADIES AND GUESTS

Mr. H. S. Gray

Vice-Chairman Executive Committee

Response—Mrs. H. Raban

Vice-Chairman Harpenden Urban District Council



Toast—HARPENDEN & DISTRICT CHAMBER
OF TRADE

Mrs. H. Raban

Response—Mr. F. N. Salisbury

Chairman of Executive Committee



Entertainment

Arthur Raven

A Piano, a Song, and a Story

Arthur Saunders

The Magical Humorist



THE KING

Harpenden revels 1951

Friday, May 25, 1951

HARPENDEN FREE PRESS

NINE

They Quickly Disposed Of 1,600 Cakes



More than 1,600 cakes in double quick time found their way into 400 young tummies at the children's party in the Public Hall on Thursday. M4855F

Harpenden Fairie Queen arrives at the Revels Ball, May 1951



Charity events

★ **Flood Relief**

Enjoy a pleasant evening and at the same time contribute to helping those who have suffered from the recent calamity.

The **COBRA CLUB** is presenting a

GRAND VARIETY CONCERT

at the
PUBLIC HALL, HARPENDEN on

★ **Monday, March 9th, 1953**
at 8 p.m.

Contributions by members of
COBRA CLUB : LIGHT OPERATIC SOCIETY
DRAMA LEAGUE : HARPENDEN BALLET
SCHOOL : BOY SCOUTS ASSOCIATION ("Gang Show") : ST. JOHN'S YOUTH CLUB ("Vaudeville")
etc., etc.

ADMISSION:
Reserved 10'6 (first 2 rows) - - 5/- 1 1 3'6
Unreserved 1'6

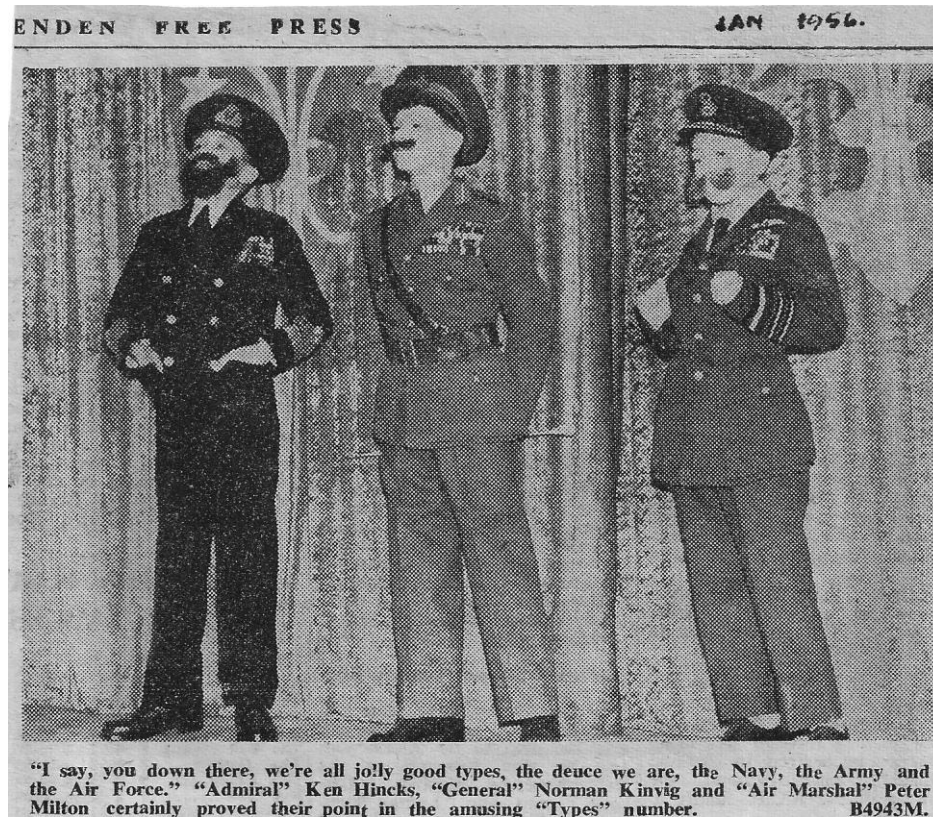
Tickets obtainable from: THORN'S, HIGH ST., HARPENDEN
ALSO BY TEL HARPENDEN 224

★ **Keep this date free**

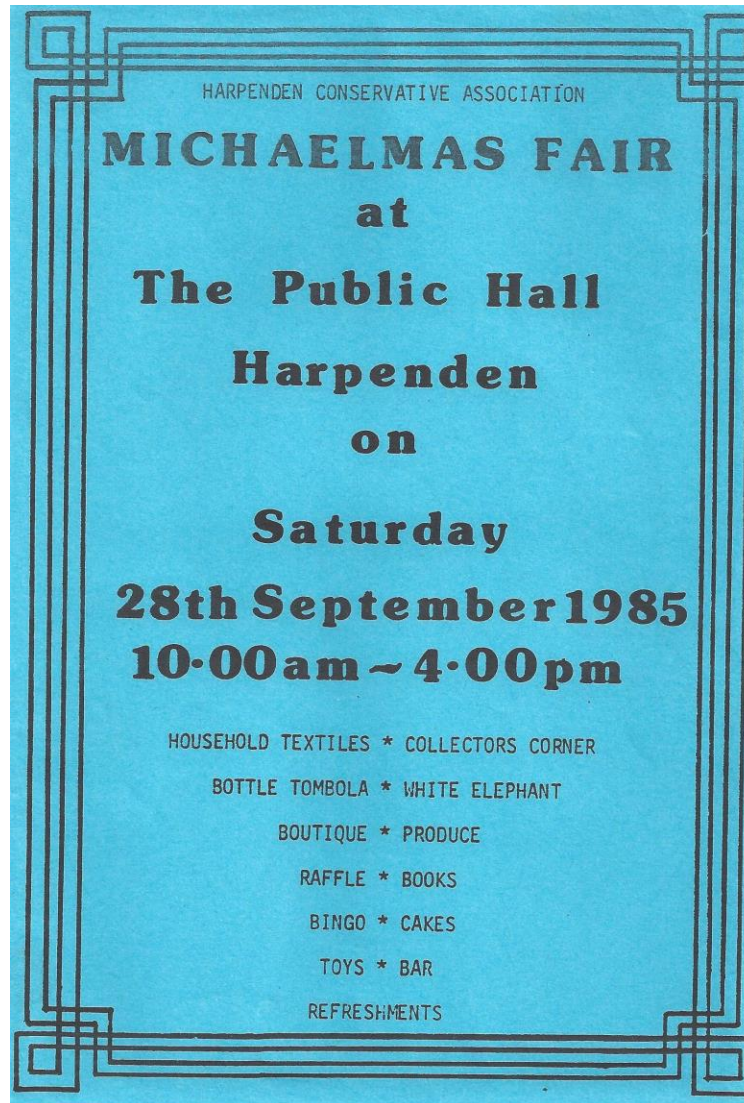
Coronation Dinner, 1953. Can you name anyone?



Gang Show – in 1956



Ephemeral flyers for events give a flavour of the times



Harpenden Horticultural Society – a regular event – 50th anniversary exhibition, 1996



Gala and Millennial Concert

Harpenden Light Operatic Society

50th Anniversary Gala Concert

*HARPENDEN PUBLIC HALLS
SATURDAY 22nd JULY 2000
at 8 pm*

Ticket £8.00

Unreserved

Not Returnable

Harpenden Light Operatic Society



50th Anniversary Concert

22 July 2000

Sir John Lawes School Prize Day, with concert band - 2001



Rug sale in 2006 - one of many commercial events – sales, auctions, craft fairs



Sample of annual Brambleton Model Railway exhibitions – Les Casey was a regular visitor

Airport/Railway model at Brambleton Model Railways Exhibition. Harpenden Public Halls. Jan. '07.



Can you add photos, programmes, flyers of events of organisations you have been involved in over the years?

At Seniors' Forum Symposium. Public Halls. Sept. 2015.

