



# Lillington Local History Society



NOVEMBER 2017

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childhood

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College

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## Programme of meetings

Regular monthly  
meeting at the  
Lillington Free  
Church,  
Cubbington Road,  
at 4.30 pm on the  
first Friday of each  
month.

### **Contact us by**

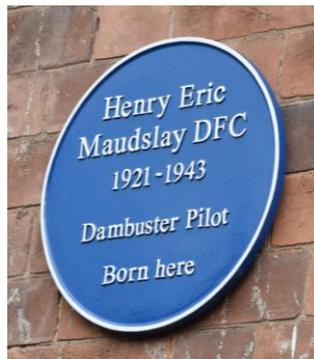
-Coming to one of  
the Society's  
monthly meetings,  
-or by referring any  
queries about the  
society,  
contributions,  
photographs or  
reminiscences to  
Peter Coulls –  
telephone 01926  
339316



A Blue Plaque, commemorating the life of Henry Eric Maudslay, DFC, was unveiled at 1 Vicarage Road, Lillington, on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

The house, now known as Eden Place, is a Care Home, but in its earliest days was home to the Maudslay family. Henry Eric Maudslay was one of the youngest of the Dam Buster pilots of WW2. Born at Vicarage Road on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1921, Henry Maudslay volunteered for the RAF the moment he left school, and was called up in 1940. His career in the RAF, although short-lived, was

meteoric. By 1943, aged only 21, he had become a Squadron Leader, and B Flight Commander of Guy Gibson's newly-formed 617 Squadron, - the "Dam Busters". The squadron was set up to breach German Hydro-electric Dams in the industrial region of the Ruhr Valley. *Operation Chastise* was a success, but only at the expense of huge losses of life on both sides.



Henry Maudslay flew over forty operations and miraculously survived the attack on the Mohne Dam, only to be shot down near the German-Dutch border as he returned to base on the night of 17 May 1943. Maudslay and his crew were killed outright when their plane burst into flames.

The Blue Plaque, sponsored by Eden Place, was unveiled by Victoria Trevelyan and her sister, - daughters of Henry Maudslay's sister, Margaret Kate. The ceremony was attended by a number of Maudslay family members, the residents of the care home, and friends and neighbours.

M Rushton

*Images Allan Jennings*

## THE SOUNDS OF CHILDHOOD

We were inundated with your memories of the Sounds of Childhood. I had to be selective:



- "Dumdidily dumdidily dumdidily da da da da da da da da da daaa - Dick Barton, Special Agent".
- The clip-clop of the horse pulling the cart that delivered milk from the farm. It always moved slowly, and knew where to stop for each delivery.
- Having grown up in a mining village, the sound of the pit men's clogs ringing on the pavement as they got off the bus to go home, or rushing to catch a bus to work. In

winter when it snowed, the noise changed to a thud, thud, as they knocked the pads of snow off their clogs.

- "Singing Together" on a strange looking amplifier in the school hall.
- British mail aeroplane going over to Coventry airport 10:15pm approx, nightly.
- The Fayre music on Campion Hills.
- Chip shop van, ringing the bell.
- Listening to Owls hooting at night.
- The squeal of a pig being stuck.
- Locomotives working heavily in the night
- The sound of the introductory music to Sunday lunchtime Family Favourites on the radio, - I can still smell roast beef and veg when I hear it.



Jean Metcalfe and Cliff Michelmore Image BBC

- Falling asleep to the repetitive sound of St Mary Magdalene Church's bell ringers rehearsing ringing the changes on Tuesday evenings.
- The school bell ringing for breaks..... The before-school bell stopping, and you knew you were late- and in trouble!
- Charley's ice cream van music on hot summer days; The rag and bone man. The Fayre on Campion Hills: music of the day, whirrs, beeps and horns.
- The soporific hissing of the gas light with no other distracting sounds except conversation. The factory hooters in Worcester indicating the beginning and ending of shifts (and marking the New Year)
- The clock's Westminster chimes with no other distracting sounds except conversation

- The noise of the enamel bowl in the sink.
- The clanking of the water pump (by hand) at my Great Aunt's near Malvern
- The electric radio on without having to bother about preserving any batteries
- The Billy Cotton Band-show round about Sunday lunchtime
- The beginning of "Grand Hotel" on the radio at 8.30 pm on a Sunday, because that marked bedtime and the prospect of Monday morning school the next day.
- The startling hiss of vehicle air-brakes heard for the first time, of which now we take no notice.
- Air raid sirens
- The music for the radio show "Workers Playtime" and "In Town Tonight". Wilfred Pickles and Mabel; "Much Binding in the Marsh"



- London Trams ringing their bells in the yellow smog, their wheels grinding metal-on-metal round the curves in the tracks.
- The clippie's ping as she punched your ticket. (Each route had its own range of tickets!)
- The one sound of childhood that I remember and we rarely hear now is whistling, especially men on their way to work etc, my father was always whistling.

- "Sing something Simple" on the wireless on the way back from the beach with my uncle Jim.

## APOLOGIES

The photograph on page 8 in the July 2017 edition of the Newsletter was wrongly attributed to Gary Timms. Our apologies to Gary Timlin whose image it actually was.

## SOCIETY VISIT TO PRINCETHORPE COLLEGE



Thirty two members of the Society visited Princethorpe College on July 26<sup>th</sup>. After a short history of the College, they made an extensive tour of the buildings led by Alex Darkes and Dr Nick Baker. The College is built around the original buildings dating from 1835. The site's initial purpose was to serve as the home for a group of Benedictine nuns who had fled from persecution in France in 1792. They were a closed order, obeying a strict code.

The main priory church, see above, was built in 1901. No expense was spared. By 1960 the number of nuns had dropped to 40, and they finally left in 1966 when the current College was opened.



The original buildings have been developed in several highly imaginative ways. Building work continues. The first church, built in 1835, has been divided into two storeys. The upper level is the main library, see left, the arches and original stained glass windows providing an unique atmosphere for the students' reading. The lower level is the theatre. The small round cloister, below left, is the burial place for 97 nuns, remembered through the black lozenge shaped plaques on the pillars. The cloister, originally open to the sky, has now been roofed and acts as a meeting and music room. The graves remain beneath the floor.

Many members commented that they had driven by the College on numerous occasions but had had no idea of its complexity and beauty. The current 885 pupils have a stunning and truly imaginative environment in which to learn. *Images Princethorpe College, Peter Coulls, Chris Rhodes*



## ON THE BEAT

The building now occupied by Andrew Lee Dental Practice situated at the top of Crown Way was originally when built the local Police Station for Lillington. Prior to this there was Police accommodation located to the rear of 46 Cubbington Road, until recently used as Nursery. This building was the Corporation House for Lillington before Lillington was incorporated within the boundary of the Borough of Royal Leamington Spa in 1890. This process brought the responsibility for policing Lillington under the control of the Watch Committee for the Borough, who also operated the Fire Brigade.

At a time when police officers patrolled the beat, the main Police Station was in High Street, Leamington, previously the Town Hall and now the Polish Club. In all probability officers would patrol on their own and would be expected to follow a specific route or beat. A copy of the Leamington Borough Police Standing Orders sets out in detail the 'round' and time to be taken in the course of your perambulations. They were classified as Day Duty Beats and Night Duty Beats, sometimes being coupled together; the 1931 Standing Orders also makes reference to Motor Patrol. The latter has particular resonance as my late father Fred Coulls spent some of his police career in motor patrol within the Warwickshire Constabulary, although when he first joined the force he signed up to the Borough Police force.

All constables would start at the High Street with officers processing to their Beats having paraded to receive information and be inspected for their turnout. I have selected one or two examples of beat Routes covering Lillington.

### " No.5 BEAT. TIME : 2 HOURS



**1<sup>st</sup> Round** – Commence Kenilworth Road to Boundary ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) ; Cloister Crofts to Poultry Farm, across field to Lime Avenue (1 hour) ; Cubbington Road, Waterworks ( $1\frac{1}{4}$ ) ; return Cubbington Road, Manor Road, Farm Road, Vicarage Road, Lillington Road ( $1\frac{3}{4}$ ) ; Wathen Road, Brownlow Street, Campion Road, Lillington Road to Round Tree (2 hours).

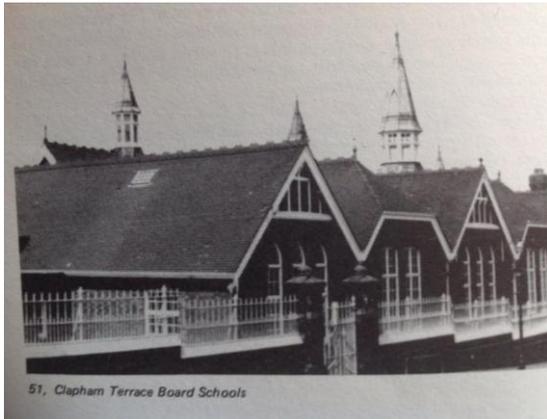
**2<sup>nd</sup> Round** – Lillington Avenue to Rugby Road School (10) ; disperse children, then patrol Northumberland Road to Lillington Avenue (1 hour) ; Lillington Avenue to Winterholme ( $1\frac{1}{4}$ ) ; Cloister Crofts to Kenilworth Road boundary ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ ) ; return Kenilworth Road, Parade, Bath Street to Police Station (2 hours).

The details of the Night beats add a little more to the streets to be included and buildings specifically Castel Froma at 2.10am and 4.55am with Lillington Church to be passed at 2.25 am and 5.10am. The officer would be allowed a coffee break at 1.05 am. Other buildings singled out for attention were Lillington Post Office and the Waterworks. All this reflects a time past to ensure the safety and security of the Lillington residents.

*Peter Coulls*

## **NORMAN PRATT REMEMBERS** Royal Leamington Spa from 1933 to 2017

Although understandably I know little about it, I was born at the Warneford Hospital on the Radford Road which closed in 1993, and has now been replaced with a housing development. I lived nearby in one of three small cottages at the bottom of Gordon Street with my father, a “dustman “, and my mother, a cook. These properties were replaced many years ago with more appealing dwellings. At the rear is a small graveyard where the “gang” irreverently spent many happy hours. After years of neglect the grave stones have been relocated, with a lawn, and edged with flower beds.

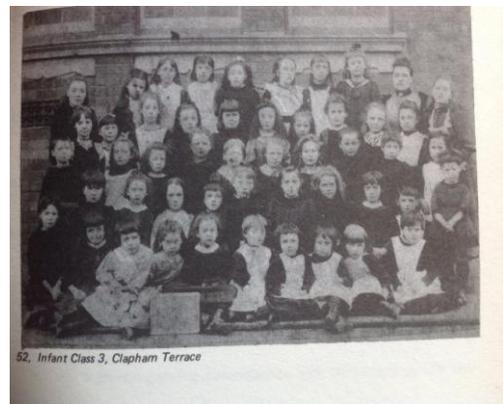


The nearest school was Clapham Terrace Juniors where at 4 years old I started my education, and which is still a fine school today although changed in many ways.

No longer  
do pupils

have to stand under the clock to receive a caning by the Headmaster, Mr Baxter, a fate I suffered a number of times.

*(Images from 'A Spa and it's Children', F. O Shaughnessy, 1979)*



Just over the canal bridge by the school lived a man who had the equipment to recharge accumulators which was the only source of power to run a radio. It was many years before the gas lamps in my cottage became obsolete.

I was a resident of the “Old Town “. On the corner of Althorpe Street the imposing building was originally a Police Station, subsequently replaced by the Polish Club. There is still a collection of small shops today, but the area does not appear to have changed greatly in appearance from the area I remember. Although the Railway Station has been updated and its appearance uplifted from the effort of the Friends of Leamington Station, my memory is of catching the steam train to travel to the Cotswolds to stay the summer with relatives. In those days without a ticket it cost one old penny to go on to the platforms.

As a youngster there were plenty of ways of enjoying oneself. The River Leam provided countless hours of fishing from the Mill gardens bridge, now banned. The Mill gardens also had a line of large trees, probably planes, which provided the wickets for our cricket games. These trees have since been replaced and no longer appear to provide a useful wicket. Opposite the Mill Gardens is Welshes Meadow which on a number of years provided the opportunity for skating. In the mid 1940's even the Leam froze over and those daring or foolhardy enough also ventured on to the ice. In the Jephson Gardens was a glass sided Pavilion where a number of very popular acts performed. A great favourite was the Great

Chang, a magician, whose closing trick was catching a bullet in his mouth. Across the pathway was a putting green, and which often featured an Archery Competition.



Entertainment was available at the Town's four Cinemas, The Regal, the Regent, the Scala (affectionately known as the Fleapit), and the Clifton in Spencer Street. All have now gone except for the Regal but now renamed, "Vue". The Clifton was a favourite Saturday morning venue where for six old pence there was a feature film, (Flash Gordon , Roy Rogers or Gene Autry,) and a short supporting film.

Another popular building was the swimming baths, now replaced by the Library and Art Centre. In charge was Mr Val Clark who on a number of occasions ordered me off the premises for misbehaving.

Opposite the Town Hall was Burtons, the tailors, above which was a Snooker Hall and a Dance School, both of which are still there and where I spent many happy hours.

On my way to the Clifton Cinema I would pass a stone building next to the Parish Church known as the Well. Although there were numerous springs in the area providing the famous Spa Water this was probably the best known where it could be taken using a chipped enamel cup chained to the wall. The water can still be taken at a small "well" near the Pump Rooms.

In 1943 I began schooling at the Boys' College, now being converted into apartments. Across the road at the rear of the College was a brewery, and the stables where the horses which drew the dustcarts were stabled. To the rear of the building was the school playing field which during the war was dug up for providing vegetables. My journey took me past Christchurch, a striking building facing the Parade. Built in 1824 it was closed in 1950 due to safety issues, then demolished in 1959 when it became a small garden and tennis courts.

The town could boast several major manufacturers, eg, Automotive Products, Henry Griffiths making jewellery, both now gone, but Flavels remains, albeit called Rangemaster. These businesses are now being replaced by technological companies. The town also had many first class shops, and hotels eg, Francis's, Woodward's, Burgis and Colbournes, the Regent Hotel (now a Travel Lodge), and the Manor House Hotel, now apartments, although the façade has been retained.

There have been changes in Lillington since we moved to Stirling Avenue in 1967. Domestically the properties would display front lawns and flower beds but have since been replaced by paving stones or tarmac to cater for the motor car. The "Round Tree" purported to be the centre of the country finally succumbed but was replaced with one grown from an acorn from the original tree, and appears to be growing well. The Walnut Tree Public House has been replaced by a Tesco mini market. There have been many changes over the years, some no doubt forced by circumstances, and some not all welcome, but Leamington and its surrounding neighbourhood still retains many of its appealing features, and a great place to live and visit.

*Norman Pratt*

## LILLINGTON'S HEXAGONAL HOUSES

We understand that the hexagonal houses on Cubbington Road are to be demolished. They were built in 1967. Chris Smith, a senior architect employed by Warwick builders Lewis and Watters lead a design team to investigate the practicality and manufacturing potential of producing a system built prefabricated dwelling capable of meeting the growing demand for family homes.



Various geometric shapes were considered, but it was decided that the hexagonal plan form allowed for reasonably sized and proportioned living areas, while linked hexagonal units were efficient in land use, achieving medium/high development density, resulting in relatively low plot ratios and costs.

The four hexagonal houses in Lillington were the only ones completed for private sale. They originally cost £3500 each [1967] and were unique as actual houses..



*Kathy Hobbs.*

*(Colour images Gary Timlin)*



## Lillington Local History Society Website



The website address is: [www.lillingtonhistory.org](http://www.lillingtonhistory.org)

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