

Into the 1980's

Harborne Tenants,
Limited. § § § §



1908

PRICE THREEPENCE.

at Moor Pool



The Moor Pool in Autumn

The front cover is reproduced from the Company's first brochure published in 1908.

Foreword



This booklet has been prepared to inform new residents of the Estate on its facilities and history.

A copy is being provided for each household, to inform some, and to remind others.

I trust that the contents will be both useful and of interest.

R. F. Griffiths
Chairman
Harborne Tenants Limited.

Summer 1980

Moor Pool To-day ~ A message to Residents



You are of course aware of the many advantages of this delightful Estate so close to all amenities with its well built houses of varied and pleasing design, the hall, tennis courts and pool, together with bowling green, allotments and shops. All of these can readily be appreciated as you walk around its tree lined avenues, groves and pathways with their open spaces and grass verges, but are you aware of the other advantages which are not so readily seen ?

Do you know of the Company – Harborne Tenants Limited ?

1. That there is a Board of Directors who look after the satisfactory running of the Company for the benefit of the shareholders who elected them, but with the well-being constantly in mind of all residents, and who jealously guard your rights and privileges ?
2. That there is an efficient office staff led by an experienced and competent Company Secretary readily accessible for advice as to procedure regarding tenancy matters, etc ?
3. That there is a knowledgeable and competitive works department with a Manager fully conversant with all maintenance problems concerning the various types of houses on the Estate, only too happy to quote and advise ?
(Private owners can and do take advantage of this on-the-spot expertise.)

(All enquiries should be addressed to the Company Secretary)

Do you know of the Residents Association ?

1. That there is a Residents Association which uses the main hall and other amenities for its many events, and which constantly seeks to provide new and varied entertainment for all residents ?
Dances, Drama, Outings and Music are but a few examples.
2. That the Residents Association welcomes all residents to participate in all of the amenities, subject only to vacancies and normal acceptance by the various groups ?
3. That the Residents Association has a Residents Savings Group that facilitates purchase of shares in Harborne Tenants Limited as these become available ?

All enquiries should be addressed to the appropriate officers of the Residents Association. Please refer to the list on the inside back cover of this booklet.

The Estate, which is a Conservation area, is unique; many articles have been written about its village atmosphere, with its compact well-planned houses and surroundings which are envied and admired countrywide. Although all of these things and more go to make up the Estate, its main wealth is its Residents. It may be that you are not aware of the many social activities, etc. and this booklet will point the way for you to participate if you so desire.

The Years Roll by



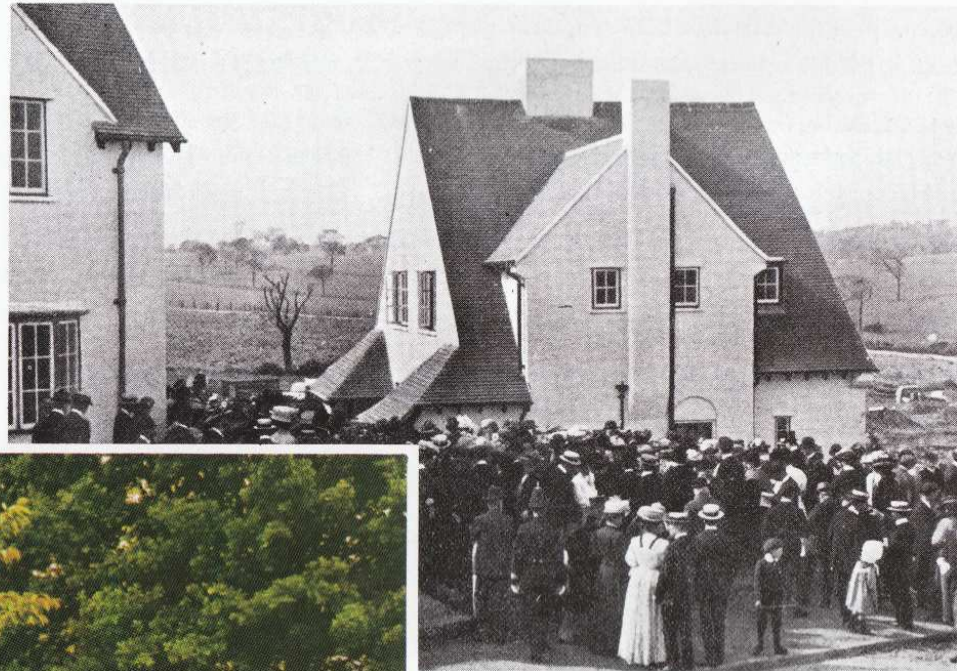
Many years separate these comparable views showing how the maturity of the trees has softened the outline of the buildings. A tribute indeed to the forward thinking of the early planners.



1908~1980



*A picture taken at the opening ceremony
on 24th May, 1908 conducted by
Mr. Henry Vivian, M.P., while below
another comparable view photographed
June, 1980.*



A short history of Harborne Tenants Ltd.



Harborne Tenants Limited was founded in 1907; the first houses at the Park Hill Road end were occupied in 1908 and building of the Estate was completed in Carless Avenue about 1912.

The Estate represents an early British experiment in town planning and the first of its kind in Birmingham. It was conceived through the foresight and inspiration of John Sutton Nettlefold who also served the City as Chairman of Birmingham Housing Committee. According to the records and the recollections of his family, his aims were to provide an estate of modern well-built houses in an attractive setting and of varied size to attract a cross section of the community as tenants paying reasonable rents. A further objective was for tenants to buy shares in the Company progressively so that eventually they would own and manage the Estate on a co-operative basis.

The Estate covers 54 acres of undulating ground for which the architects, Martin and Martin of Birmingham, designed five hundred houses to be erected in blocks of two, four, six and eight. Nine basic designs were illustrated in the Company's first brochure but these were varied to suit local conditions. Close inspection reveals many minor variations and it is questionable whether any two houses were absolutely identical. A most important aspect of planning foresight was the allocation of houses at nine to the acre at a time when forty houses per acre were permitted and terraced back-to-back housing was the accepted norm.

Only high quality building materials were used; locally made red facing bricks and imported Scandinavian pine predominated. To pursue Nettlefold's aim of achieving modest rents, economies additional to building in blocks were adopted. These included use of existing gradients to avoid excavation and adoption of combined sewage systems to make one connection between several houses and the main sewer. Roadways were of reduced width; by agreement with Birmingham City Council these were constructed of sixteen feet macadam, five feet turfed and tree lined margins and eight feet footpaths.

Among the amenities provided were (and are to this day) a bowling green, a hall for dancing and social events, a social clubroom, skittle alley and billiards room. There was also a Village Green with Maypole, long since converted to tennis courts. The architects scheme

allowed for open spaces behind houses which have been used as allotments. As demand increased garage facilities were added to the sides of houses where appropriate and at discreet sitings in the rear areas.

From the outset the community managed its own affairs but Nettlefold's second ideal of co-operative ownership was never fully realised. Due to the hardships of depression and unemployment in the 1920's and 1930's many tenants were unable to take up their full shareholdings. Between 1924 and 1939 some one hundred and fifty houses were sold on lease in order to pay off an original loan from the Public Works Loan Board and later to redeem loan stock.

At its initiation, Harborne Tenants Limited was registered as a Society under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893. Due to changes in the law it was converted in 1940 into a Limited Company of the same name under the Companies Act, 1929. The newly formed Company continued to follow the policies of the Society without change.

In the 1950's two attempts were made by substantial non-resident shareholders to obtain control of the Company. Both were unsuccessful. Press reports of the time make it clear that these advances were resisted successfully by the staunch support and loyalty of the resident shareholders, both leaseholders and tenants, who retained a majority of the shares.

During the 1950's a few further houses were sold to redeem debenture stock.

In 1957, at a ceremony to mark fifty years of estate management, Herbert Manzoni (later Sir Herbert), the then Birmingham City Architect and Surveyor, praised the original concepts of founder and architects who, in his opinion, had exceeded in many respects the standards required of town planning half a century later.

To assist in preserving the Estate in its present form, and on an initiative from the Company, the area was designated in 1970 a Conservation Area under the Civic Amenities Act, 1967.

For many years a policy of continuing improvement to properties has been followed. It says much for the Martins' original designs that the addition of modern facilities has been achieved to a high degree. To this day the principle of management from within has been upheld as residents have long comprised

a majority of the Board of Directors (Management Committee until 1940). There have been, and still are notable exceptions and the Company has been well served by a number of prominent persons from outside the Estate; all have been fired with a desire to keep the Estate in its present and pleasant form.

Special mention must be made of the late Alderman Mrs. E. M. Crosskey, daughter of Mr. Nettlefold, whose tremendous personal interest in, and enthusiasm for the Estate were invaluable over a period of many difficult years. As Chairman of the Board, and later as its first President, an honour conferred on her as a tribute to her work, she set a shining example of public service.

It is worthy of note that the maximum remuneration received by a Director of £6 per annum, established for Committee Members over seventy years ago, has remained unchanged, surely a tribute to the many who have served in this way.

Continuation of the inflationary spiral together with rent restriction laws made the profitable letting of houses increasingly difficult. In 1975 it was decided to sell selected properties on preferential terms to tenants who wished to purchase. In addition, further selected properties would be sold on the open market as and when they fell vacant.

The objectives were threefold: to execute responsibility to shareholders by maintaining a proper balance between capital and assets; to retain the Estate as closely as possible in its present form through financial stability; and to keep faith with those tenants unable or unwilling to purchase.

Harborne Tenants Limited was one of a number of early experiments in town planning which attempted to embrace co-operative ownership. Today it is unique. It is the only small company of its kind that remains independent. A most important principle set by the Founder that the Estate should be self-managed has been preserved. The Company moves into the 1980's in a firmer financial position than at any time in its history. The desire of its shareholders to preserve the Estate in its present form has been outstanding for many years and one assumes that this will continue. The historian should not prophesy, but it is clear that the Company is in a strong position to remain self-managed and to continue its progressive change into a property owning community not so far removed from the original concept of John Sutton Nettlefold.

HARBORNE TENANTS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Secretary
Mrs. H. Everard
92 Ravenhurst Road
Harborne

Air Rifle Club

Mrs. S. Preece
13 The Circle

Youth Club

Mr. P. May
114 Ravenhurst Road

Circle Tennis Club

Mr. R. Holder
47 High Brow

Skittles Club

Mr. B. Fuggle
84 Ravenhurst Road

Drama Club

Mrs. S. Preece
13 The Circle

Bowling & Fishing Club

Mr. O.B. Hayes
71 Moor Pool Avenue

Music Group

Mrs. H. Everard
92 Ravenhurst Road

Moor Pool Tennis Club

Miss S. Wright
69 Moor Pool Avenue

Savings Club

Mr. P. Sermon
38 High Brow

Billiards & Snooker Club

Mr. H. Burrows
56 Selly Oak Road
Bournville

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