LAW AND ORDER IN THE HORMEADS

CIVIL LAW AND ORDER

Tribal law would obtain until the Romans established their authority and military rule in the area. Settlements were governed by magistrates who were chosen by the citizens of the town. The peaceful Roman era was succeeded by the less well organised Saxon period with small villages developing their own methods of self-protection and rough and ready justice. The Saxons held a village 'moot' or meeting in the open, attended by one man from each family. The village meeting place of Hormead was probably the site of Mutfords or to the south between Hare Street and Little Hormead. Offenders were taken to the Moot and their guilt or innocence decided, any penalty being paid forthwith.

Various laws were promulgated, particularly after the monks had brought christianity and its principles to the country. The monks alsoo brought the art of writing with them, so that Saxon laws were written down. About AD700, Ine the King of Wessex sent men all over the country to collect these laws and customs to write them down in 'The Doome of Ine'. These laws were revised by King Alfred c850. At the beginning of his book he stipulated, 'That which you do not wish other men to do to you, do ye not to them. From this one doom a man may decide how he should judge everyone rightly. He needs no other doom book.' Alfred laid down specific fines for various misdemeanors; refusal to pay the fine resulted in being made a slave or thrall. Murder was compensated to the relatives by wergild i.e. man-price – a nobleman being worth six times the price of an ordinary freeman or churl.

Catching the criminal was so difficult that many escaped justice and Alfred's grandson, King Athelstan, ordered every man must have a lord, the lord being responsible for bringing this man to trial at the Moot. Athelstan also arranged for the country to be divided up into districts called 'Hundreds'. Hormead was in the Hundred of Edwinstree and the Edwinstree court would have met once every four weeks. Above this local court was the Shire Moot, which met twice or three times a year at Hertford. The earlier folk-moots had been held in the open air, often under an ancient tree, by a large stone, or on a prominent hill. Perhaps this was the origin of the name of the hundred Edwins-tree.

When William Duke of Normandy conquered England in 1066 he made a few changes to the Saxon system of law. To make sure the laws were carried out, however, he enforced an old system of dividing towns and villages into tithings, or groups of ten men, each

responsible for the good behaviour of the other nine in their group. One of the ten represented them at the Court Leet held by the Lord of the Manor. Hormead acquired three manors, Little Hormead, Hormead (bury) and Hormead Redeswell (Hormead Hall). Part of Hare Street also came within the jurisdiction of Corneybury Manor. The Manor Courts lasted until c1849.

Each year a local man was elected by his neighbours at the Court Leet to be Constable for the next 12 months. He was unpaid, but given a staff as his badge of office. He was expected to keep a strict watch on village affairs at all times, to take charge of wrong-doers when handed over to him until he could bring them to trial; to follow the hue and cry i.e. when a horn sounded the alarm (the hue) and then shouts of alarm (the cry) went up, he had to drop what he was doding and follow in pursuit; to inquire into offences and find out who had committed the offence; to report all crimes too the courts of law; to serve warrants and summons and to obey all the lawful commands of the High Constable and the courts. The High Constable was appointed in a large district to make sure the Constables did their job properly. Being constable for the year was no small undertaking, especially when a man had a full-time job besides, earning his living.

Minor matters were dealt with locally, and crimes of a more serious nature by the shire authorities. Henry II decided that his judges, instead of sitting at Westminster, should travel the country regularly. These royal judges held courts in important towns, such as Hertford, to deal with the most serious crimes at the courts or Assizes. He also provided for the system of 12 jurymen to assist the judge.

Another layer of court hereings was instigated by Edward III when Justices of the Peace, unpaid county landowners and gentlemen, presided over the Shire Court to assist the Sheriff who was the King's representative in the county. Their quarterly meetings became known as Quarter Sessions. The legal system was thus passing gradually out of the hands of the manorial courts into Petty and Quarter sessions courts and higher courts.

Henry VII was strict with the JPs and ordered them to deal severely with vagabonds and beggars – many on the road as a result of the barons having been forced to do away with the services of their own retainers by command of the King, and the conclusion of the Wars of the Roses. The number of out-of-work men, called 'vagabonds' increased in Henry VIII's time when servanats at the monasteries lost their jobs at the dissolution, and later when labourers and cottagers lost their jobs when fields were enclosed. Our parish

registers reflect the movements of these vagrants passing through our villages. The parish constables were supposed to search out strangers and keep them out of the parish.

Since the constable, and the overseer of the poor, were appointed for the parish, the Church and its vestry (where they were elected) became the centre of village life and the point from which law and order was maintained. The villagers were called together to discuss village affairs in the vestry by the tolling of the mote, or moot bell one evening in Easter week – recalling the earlier gatherings in Saxon days. To this day, our church Annual General Meeting is held just before Easter.

The parish officers elected at the old vestry meeting to oversee the affairs of the village during the course of the following year were: Churchwardens who were in charge of parish affairs; Overseers of the Poor; the Surveyor of the Highways who organised road repairs; the Constable. All these tasks were unremunerated. Occasionally a man refused point blank to serve in some capacity (e.g. in 1663 Francis Wells of Gt Hormead husbandman refused to be sworn constable) but mostly the householders shouldered their obligations to the rest of the community.

The Duties of the Parish Constable

His duties were onerous and took a great deal of time if performed properly – hence the need for a man with some leisure or a wealthier man who did not need every moment in the day to earn his living. The householder appointed to do the job for that year would be expected to perform the following duties:-

1. To see that the fields were properly enclosed and any straying animals were impounded, or safely locked up in the village enclosure or 'pound' provided for that purpose. Any contravention of rules and laws was supposed to be reported by the village constable to the Justices at the Quarter Sessions and these reports were called 'Presentments' e.g. 1593-4 Presentment of Thomas Brande of Harestreet, in the parish of the Hormeads for breaking into a 'certain park of the Queen, namely the pound', and again in 1723, Presentment by the petty constables of The Earl of Essex for not repairing the Hare Street pound. One wonders where this was situated.
2. He had powers of arrest and commital and was expected to carry out any punishments meted out by the court – often whippings, a most unpleasant task, or supervising a hanging. He was responsible for holding a prisoner, either

in his own house or in a cage, roundhouse or village lockup if one were available, until convenient to present him at court. If he let a prisoner escape, he was liaible to be fined, e.g. 3 May 1641 'Richard Kirby, Simon Fabyn and John Jones, all of Stortford, shall pay to the Overseers of the poor of Great Hormead the sum of £7 for allowing Thomas Cathmar the reputed father of a bastard child of Ann Salmon of Gt Hormead to escape out of their custody.' While Titus Chapman was constable in 1608 he arrested a beggar and decided to keep him in his house, he was innkeeper at The Bell, for safe custody before passing him onto the next parish, but this had the most unfortunate result for the beggar died and Hormead parish had to pay for his burial! Parish Register GH 1608: 'John Branch of Burwell in the county of Cambridge being taken begging in the parish of St Martins in the field, having his passe to the said parishy of Burwell, dide and was buried in the crofte of Titus Chapman Cunstable the 7th of March Anno Dni 1608.'

3. Then, as now, a careful watch was kept on people selling beer and ale to make sure they held a licence qualifying them to open at certain hours and that the proceedings were 'orderly'. Any lapse brought swift retribution: 29 Oct 1658 Presentment that John Powter of Great Hormead, victualler, allowed persons to sit and tipple in his house on the Lord's Day. 10 Jany 1697/8 Indictment of Ned Shelford of Great Hormead for keeping a disorderly alehouse. A whole series of cases was brought against Hormead men who kept drinking houses and had no licence viz: Robert Piggott in 1621, Richard Toogood in 1623, and the enterprising Henry Brand of The Swan who kept on selling beer without a licence and ended up cooling his heels in Hertford prison for a few weeks until he learned his lesson in 1600.
4. Apprehending thieves and presenting them at court with a charge against them, and names of witnesses. This was no mean feat out here, since the culprit had first to be apprehended and then kept until the court met, then taken to Hertford, probably bound and sitting in a cart or wagon. The punishment was fierce, so rather than face a trial a number of the Hormead criminals fled the district, e.g. 1583 'John Williamson of Hormead, labourer, along with Benstead, Sympson and Atcock, burgled the house of Thomas Gynne at Great Hormead and stole a diaper table cloth (6/8d), a pair of linen sheets (5/-), a towel (6/8), a felt hat (2/6), a pillowbar (2/8), 4 silver bells (4/-), and a silver whistle with a carol (16d). Williamson was found not guilty; Atcock was 'at large'; others to hang.' On 4

October 1773 Joseph Steward, a Hormead labourer was indicted for stealing a pair of worsted stockings, valued at 10d from John Hart. He was found guilty and sentenced to be whipped. The whip would have been wielded by our village constable who then probably had to transport the wretched Joseph back home again. Grand larceny (the legal term in England for a theft of property of the value of one shilling or more) was altogether a more serious matter, and the punishment likely to be hanging. Three or four cases occurred in the Hormeads, one of them having an interesting sequel. In 1588 Robert Lucas, a labourer of Hormead, stole 4 oxen, valued at £12 from John Thurger, was found guilty, but 'allowed clergy.' This curious custom arose from the ancient right of a clergyman to exemption from trial in a secular court being extended to all those who could read. After the 15th century this priviledge was limited to certain offences and was curtailed so that it could be claimed only once. It was abolished in 1827. As late as 1835 Richard Challis of Great Hormead, labourer, was indicted for stealing a grindstone, valued at 5/-, from James Green, farmer (at Hare Street Cottage). He had been convicted before, so on this occasion was transported for life.

5. Murder we think of as one of the worst crimes in the book, and only one was committed as far as we know up to the 1800s in the Hormeads. It must have caused a great stir in the village where a number of men were involved, 12 as jurymen, in the inquisition. In 1595 John Partridge, a Hormead labourer, on '1 Sept in the course of a long-standing quarrel between himself and a neighbour called John Annycke, assaulted Annyck with a pikestaff (2d) inflicting injuries from which he died seven hours later. Partridge, very wisely, was 'at large' when the case was heard and he was found guilty of homicide. In comparison, assaulting the constable when he was carrying out his duties, seems to have been very mildby punished in 1762 'James Laurence of Gt Hormead, carpenter, for assaulting John Corbet in the execution of his duty as constable. Fined 1s.'
6. Disturbers of the peace were brought to justice, but one feels from the entries in the court records that they were a persistant nuisance before being brought to court. Our ancestors had a delightful word to describe people who vexatiously stirred up lawsuits and quarrelled with everyone. In 1651-3 John Pluckrose was put in prison for being a 'barrator' and he was kept there for two years because no-one was willing to act as surety for his

appearance at court at the right time and meanwhile to keep the peace. In 1698, Ned Shelford, who had already been in trouble for keeping a disorderly alehouse, was before the court 'for being a profane curser and swearer.' In 1787 John Laurence, carpenter had to 'answer Ann his wife for a breach of the peace.'

7. Sunday observance was regulated by the law in the 17th century and the constable had to make sure the law was kept in this respect. Travelling was restricted and one of our constables took two men to court for driving through the village with a loaded cart in 1682. Tippling on a Sunday, especially during the house of divine service was considered a disgraceful offence.
8. Constables had to keep an eye on the villagers to prevent them from taking in any strangers who might become a burden on the poor rate or need even temporary relief from that source. It was for this reason that the notoriously bad-tempered John Pluckrose was taken to court yet again in April 1653, accused this time of taking 'one Thomas West to dwell with him as an inmate'.
9. Part of the duty of keeping watch and ward in the parish involved taking care of the parish armour and providing and maintaining the parish butts in the days when archery was practiced. Elizabethan law placed on the parish the responsibility for relieving maimed or sick pressed soldiers or mariners. The churchwardens and constables gathered a rate to pay the pensions, usually 12d a week, granted by the county treasurer. Apparently the same rate could be used for relief paid by the parish to soldiers travelling through on their way home.

From Constable to Policeman

The Justices annually chose a High Constable for each Hundred who was usually a landowner or prosperous farmer since the post was unpaid and his expenses (unlike those of the local constable) were not reimbursed. This two-tiered system had worked well for hundreds of years but in the late 18th century lawlessness grew as the towns expanded, and the population increased. Highwaymen (probably some residing in our villages well poised to strike at travellers on Reed Hill), crowds rioting, thieves and pickpockets flourishing, all contributed to a growing sense that a police force needed to be created to be truly effective in checking rising crime. Sir Robert Peel persuaded Parliament to give London a police force in 1829 and uniformed men patrolled the streets carrying a truncheon concealed beneath their long frock coat tails, and a rattle (later replaced by a whistle) for their form of hue and cry. The men

started as constables, and were promoted officers when they had proved themselves fit for a more senior post. The metropolitan police force was so successful, that Essex esablished a county police force in 1839 and the neighbouring counties of Hertfordshire (in 1840), Cambridgeshire and Suffolk were obliged to follow suit soon after. However, petitions from a few parishes in Hertfordshire to form a Rural Police Force met with resistance. Hormead was one of the parishes voting against such a proposal. The votes were 38 for, and 34 against. The records show that we had a local policeman in 1842 for he appeared twice at the Hertford sessions in that year.

For many years, the police house has been in Hare Street, but it has been moved twice this century. The Police Station and house was on the site where 'Wayside' now stands until its removal to south of the Beehive after the first World War. The Police House was thus on the corner of the main street junction with the road to Buntingford from the 1920s to 1965 when the house was pulled down and replaced by a modern house further up Bell Hill.

One of the latest moves to counter a rising crime rate has been the formation of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, adopted by the Hormead Parish Council in May 1986.

MILITARY LAW AND ORDER

From the Middle Ages the national skill in archery was encouraged by an obligation to serve a period in the militia of town and county. In 1557 the Lord Lieutenant of the county superseded the sheriff as commander and organiser of the Militia, sending instructions to the villages to muster men and give them some training. Each locality within the county supplied so many men both trained and armed and they were sworn in at their enrollment by the Depty Lieutenant. In 1575 37 counties recorded 183,000 able bodied men in musters from whom 12,000 were selected for special training. These elite were known as Trained Bands since the rest of the army was virtually untrained and only 63,000 were equipped.

The equipment varied over the years as bows and arrows gave way to a hand gun or caliver, and bills (nasty blades that could be attached to farm scythe handles at a pinch) also called Jack(bills). Every male owning goods worth between £10 and £20 had to provide 1 long bow, 1 sheaf of arrows, 1 steep cap or skull and 1 black bill or halberd. By 1583, the date of a most informative Muster Book for the Hundreds of Edwinstree and Odsey, the weapons were Bowes, Calivers, Jacks with Bills, some of them privately owned, some owned by the village. Among those mustered in Hormead Magna were 9 Pikemen, 17 Calivermen, 9

Archers, 21 Billmen, 3 Carpenters, among 39 'Cheife Inhabitantes and Householders' and 17 'Most hable men for service' and 6 'Pyoners or labourers.' Two of the wealthier inhabitants had a musket apiece and four had an extremely expensive piece of equipment, a corslet. Hormead village owned the following 'Armor by Statute', 2 corslets, two bowes, three calivers, one bill.' These would be locked up in a safe place between musters, most probably in the church, and were provided for men who could not afford their own armour and weapons – the 'pyoners and laborers'. A pioneer was a military artisan, employed in war-time preparing the way for the army with trenching etc.

The trades of the men were noted on the muster and militia lists, for the army had need of smiths, wheelwrights and carpenters, perhaps less use for the 'taylers, weavers, ote meal makers, bricklayers, butchers,' etc of our lists. All would have a dagger at their sides, for they seldom went without one in civilian life.

Some of the Hormead recruits might have seen Queen Elizabeth in 1588. Owing to the scare over a Spanish invasion, the county was ordered to send its troops for the defence of the country. The men went to Tilbury and were present when the queen inspected her troops there.

The village was caught up in the Civil War in the 1640s and 1650s. Little Hormead seems to have been royalist, from the Charles coat of arms still hanging in the church, but pressed men from the village might well have been on Cromwell's side. John Rackett (a member of the family who gave their name to Lower Racketts, a field on the eastern parish boundary with Furnix Pelham) paid dearly for his involvement. On 7 April 1651 there was an order (Sessions Rolls) 'that Elizabeth, widow of John Rackett whose heretofore marched into Scotland with the army and is lately dead, shall have 5s quarterly till the Bench shall give further order therein.'

Soldiers passing through the parishes of Great and Little Hormead occasionally found a place in the parish registers, e.g. 1678 'edward sturk, a soudier he was buried June the 12th and it was supoused that hed killed him selfe with drinking for hed died sudingly.' A number of beggars and cripples come in short spates in the burial registers in the wake of wars and the discharge of the soldiers at the end of wars.

Occasionally some movement of troops for a particular purpose necessitated an order to the parish for assistance. The Rev. Leonard Chappelow of Little Hormead received such an order and

responded on March 30th 1744: 'A waggon and six horses by order of the Chief Constable were sent from the Parish of Little Hormead to convey the Baggage of the Dutch soldiers from Buntingford to Baldock; Richard Randall Tenant of the Berry sent 2 horses; Jo Thake at ye Farm called Balance, sent 2 horses and a waggon; Leonard Chappelow Rector of Little Hormead sent 2 horses; we likewise sent three servants.'

The Militia system continued for centuries, though part of Cromwell's Model Army was retained on a permanent footing by Charles II to contain any rebellion and supplement the militia in case of attack. The two regiments retained became the basis of Britain's later standing army. This army was supplemented by a large number of foreign mercenaries and it is probable that the Dutch soldiers requiring assistance with their baggage were such.

The Reverend Stephen Nye of Little Hormead noted in his parish register that 'The Parsons of Hormead Magna find part of an horse to ye Trained Bands, We are joined with ye Improprietor of Buntingford. In ye year 1692 we bought a new Buff-coat Cloke Saddle & Holsters Carbine Pistolls with all other Accoutrements for our Horsemen; all which are now ledged with Mr Etheridge (Tenant to the Improprietor) at Buntingford.' Under the 1662 Militia Act all owners of property were charged with horses, arms and men, in accordance with their property, but in 1757 the liability was removed from the individual to the parish. In every parish men were chosen by lot and compelled to serve for three years or each to provide £10 for a substitute. Small owners were discharged of their liabilities by a rate levied on the parish. The management of the parish's contribution to the Militia in both men and money was usually part of the Constable's job. Sometimes one man was required from two parishes jointly, e.g. in 1796 the parishes of Little Hormead and Barkway were credited with paying 'the sum of £31.0.0d being the average bounty and fine for their default in not providing their quota of men for His Majesty's Army.' This was accepted by the Chief Constable of the Hundred of Edwinstree in lieu of the service of one man.

In the 18th century a tax was imposed in 1705 to raise funds for the militia and the list of Hormead contributors provides a useful list of householders at this date. The poorest supplied halfpennies and the manor owners three shillings and a few pence. The Hertfordshire Militia was embodied on a number of occasions in this century: in 1745 to help overthrow Charles Stuart, the Young Pretender in the north of England; in 1759-63 during the Seven Years' War; 1778-1783 during the American War of Independence; in 1780 to deal with the Gordon Riots; and in 1792 at the start of

the Napoleonic threat when recruits were found by ballot, but could buy a substitute. The Militia was in force from 1793 to 1814 during the French wars when our men would serve for three years. The Herts Regiment of Militia did not leave the country and at the Peace of Amiens disembodied only to be re-formed by ballot a few months later in 1803 and called the 33rd Regiment of Militia, and served in Ireland from 1811-13.

Troops of yeomanry were also formed in Herts in 1794, the eastern troop being commanded by Capt. J. Calvert of Albury. In 1803, seventy men were listed.

Some of the most interesting lists of Hormead men have been preserved for the years 1758-86. These were Militia Lists of men aged between 18 and 45. Prior to 1778 their occupation was given, after that they were presented in categories of farmers, traders, servants and labourers with a list of men 'with three or more children' who were quietly passed over when a ballot was taken for men to serve their three years. The chosen men might provide a substitute or pay £10, and the village constables compiling the lists did their utmost to excuse as many of their fellow villagers as possible by describing their infirmities, e.g. 'lame, one eye, maimed.' The number of men available varied quite considerably: 65 in 1761, 45 in 1765 and 34 in 1779.

In the 19th century few men are noted in the surviving documents as being soldiers. We have one outstanding soldier, the owner of Hormeadbury, who died at Waterloo. He was Edward Stables and had just rebuilt the bury when he went off to war. A memorial in the church at Great Hormead tells part of his story. 'WATERLOO. This sacred tablet is the tribute of sorrow and affection to the memory of Lieutenant Colonel Stables of Great Hormead Bury, iin the County of Herts. He served in the Continental Wars under Sir John Moore and the Duke of Wellington, and fell, gloriously, at the close of the action while commanding a Battalion of Grenadier Guards on the 18th day of June, 1815, in the 33rd year of his age.'

Hormead soldiers of the 19th century were John Skipp in 1825, Joseph Harris in 1831, David Pullen in 1880 and Basil Clutson in 1894, with a note in Rev. Charles Colson's notebook, '1856 F. Beauchamp – gone into the Army.' By 1852 the militia had lain dormant for many years but its official demise did not occur until 1908 when the introduction of the territorial force made it redundant. The names above are the only volunteers with any connection with the village whose names we know. Some of our men were quick to volunteer in 1914 before conscription became necessary. When war was declared in 1914 the small professional

army was sent to France and by the end of the Battle of Marne the regular army was a spent force. New volunteers were trained as quickly as possible, but on 27 January 1916 the Military Service Act was passed and unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 41 were made liable to conscription if not in a reserved occupation. After World War I the parish registers show no more soldiers in the villages until 1940. Conscription returned again in 1938 and it was not until 11 years later than all conscripts had returned to civil life, but the government continued with limited conscription measures until 1964. Today, the army is, once again, a volunteer professional force.

WORLD WAR ONE

The parish magazine of this period makes sombre reading revealing some of the sadness, worry and misery of a village with many of its menfolk away at war. The vicar, Francis Garden Mitchell (vicar of Great with Little Hormead 1913-23), was often reticent, but his accounts are all the more poignant for this reticence. The most astonishing fact, from our village point of view, is the number of men involved from this very small area. Out of a population of 529 (283 males) in 1911 (GH 425, LH 104) the names of 79 men were put on the roll of honour in the Parish Magazine May 1919. At that date 15 were either killed or missing and six others were wounded. The final toll of dead was 14, the blow falling particularly heavily on the Hummerstone family (3 dead) and the four Spicers not one of whom returned.

For the first time in a war, danger from the air was to be feared. In June 1916 the vicar gave his parishioners a gentle reminder of this: 'Now that we have passed the longest day it may not be out of place to briefly remind people of the duty incumbent on all to keep their lights thoroughly veiled, as a precaution against possible Zeppelin visits. Recently on going home at 11 on a dark night, we noticed at least two houses where, though the blinds were drawn, there was sufficient light to attract attention from above. Only by using some opaque curtains can we err on the side of safety. 'We be no spies' (as Joseph's brethren said), but we would like to give this friendly hint, that our village may be protected by absolute darkness.'

In this same parish magazine the vicar said, 'We heartily congratulate Mr Donald Evans on getting his commission in the Royal Flying Corps, and admire his spirit in doing so without loss of time. We are all interested in the fact that we have now a representative in the newest Arm, the Air Service, which bids fair to become only second to the Navy in the Empire's defence.' Donald

Evans' parents placed a memorial inscription in the church, between the first and second windows in the north chancel: 'In loving memory of Donald Singleton Evans Flying Officer No. 3 Squadron R.A.F. Fourth and youngest son of William Herbert and Caroline Elizabeth Evans of Great Hormeadbury who died at Delhi, India 27th May 1921 after having served in the Great War A.D. 1914-1919...His three brothers also served throughout the war and their preservation is remembered with devout gratitude by their parents who have erected this tablet.'

In August 1919 there was a great day of rejoicing and celebration of the conclusion of the peace treaty. The whole village attended and a remarkable photograph was taken of all present.

Looking for a moment at the other side of the war picture, some German prisoners were housed at Bradbury House (now The White House) in Hare Street and worked on the local farms. The tiny lodge in the garden became a lock-up or temporary prison cell for punishment. Village children stole up to the windows of the house in the evenings and peeped inside to see what the Germans were doing and sometimes saw them empty their shoes of grains of wheat, gathered in desperation no doubt to supplement their meagre diet, for food was scarce for everyone during that war. The Herts Mercury of Saturday 26 April 1919 recorded 'A Kindly Act. Four German prisoners of the Hare Street Camp at work on a farm at Hormead, volunteered to dig and tidy up a twenty-rod allotment occupied by a poor widow, 78 years of age, and with the consent of the escort performed the whole job in best fashion during two Saturday afternoons, after completing their days' work on the farm. The work was carried out with evident delight and without any fee or reward.'

By this date, the villagers were turning their thoughts to a suitable war memorial. In the parish magazine for August 1920 it was reported that the 'War Memorial collection made in July last netted a total sum of £90 and no doubt this will be increased to £100. The Committee are preparing for a general meeting of the subscribers (200 in all) when the final decisions will probably be made as to design and site.' The villagers had voted on different suggestions as to what form a memorial should take (Parish Magazine July 1919): 'Voting for suitable war memorial. For the recreation ground 30; Parish room extension 5; Nursing scheme 12; Memorial cross monument 140'. With such overwhelming support, a cross was ordered to be made and a search for a suitable base got under way. It was well-known that there had once been a huge stone at Hare Street, south of the lane to Little Hormead, by the side of the road. This huge boulder had been lost for a number of years. On

Thursday 9 September 1920 the village was visited by a group of the East Herts Archaeoloogical Society who were also anxious to get a sight of the so-called 'Old Roman Milestone' and one of them set about digging in the area thought likely to conceal it. When he failed,, a party of diggers was gathered together by two of the local farmers, Billie Patten and Andrew Weir, who each sent two labourers to do the digging. They spent a day trying to locate the boulder, again without success. Instead, it was decided to get hold of some of the granite pieces from the old post office headquarters then being demolished in London. Mr Oyler's fruit wagons went up to town regularly to the markets, so he offered to bring back the granite for the base of the cross.

The memorial cross was erected at the top of Horseshoe Hill where the Armistice Day services were held each year on the Sunday nearest the 11th of November. Nearly ten years later, the village finally got around to fencing off the memorial. January 1930: 'The Church Council has had in its care the sum of £1-5-0d balance of the War Memorial Fund, and has now paid this to the War Memorial Railing Account.' Of course, it took another committee and another meeting, held 12 February, to deliberate what 'kind of fence should be procured. A chain-link fence was decided on and holly trees were planted behind the memorial some eighteen years after this.

In view of the above story about digging for the stone at Hare Street, I was not a little surprised when I came across the following entry in the Rector of Little Hormead's tithe book: 'June 1849 The Block of Granite west side of the Road near the New Cottages removed by the Road Surveyor to be broken up for repairing the Road. By Salmon and Clutterbuck it is supposed to have been a Roman Mile Stone....' Alas, it was no such thing, nor can it now be inspected to find its true origin.

On 10 December 1929 a meeting was held to form a branch of the British Legion in Hormead and the Pelhams. By the following February, a Great Hormead Branch Benevolent Fund was reported 'now in order and the Committee will be glad of information which might help them to assist any ex-service man or his dependents.' The first President was Major M. Barclay and the Chairman Mr. S. Codrington.

WORLD WAR II

The school children were got ready for the coming hostilities by being fitted with gasmasks and on September 11th 1939 school opened a week late after the outbreak of war. Trenches were dug at the back of the school the following day – though what possible

use they could serve is a little difficult to envisage. A Home Guard was formed and a photograph of 1943/4 shows 46 men in uniform, with one absent at the time. Air Raid Wardens were trained, but a 'man from the ministry', this time the Home Office, told the parish council that this parish was in what was regarded as a safe area, that it was unlikely that bombs would be dropped here and that if they were dropped it would be an accident. In these circumstances he suggested that elaborate organisation was unnecessary and that no public warning of air raids need be given. In view of this, the parish council decided 'that no warning siren should be sounded in this parish.' (Parish Council Minutes 12 September 1939).

During 'Warship Week' 21-28 May 1942 Hormead parish contributed £4788-19-0d and also raised £105 and gave it to the Treasury as a free gift to the nation. At the end of the war the village raised £650 as a commemoration fund and gave a gift of £10 to each of the 65 serving men and women.

Five names were added to the war memorial after 1945 and a return to peace. Armistice Day became Remembrance Day in 1946 to include a memorial to those who gave their lives in the second world war. Conscription, imposed under the 1938 Conscription Act, was not rescinded until 1964.

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C.E. Jackson
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