



About Moor Pool

Inside this issue: One of Birmingham's first experiments in town planning.

Moor Pools Early Days. 2 ***The Story So Far...***

Moor Pools Centenary.

Conservation comes to Moor Pool. 3

Community Spirit Alive and Well.

Allotment Associations plans to restore allotments. 4

Residents fight inappropriate development. 5

Moor Pools architectural Character. 6

A Moor Pool Trust. 8

Moor Pool Regeneration Group.

Who are Grainger? 9

Clubs and Societies. 10

Moor Pools bowls and skittles clubs.

Moor Pool: The Next 100 Years. 11

Dates for your Diary. 12

Contact Details.

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the first publication detailing the history and plans for the historic Moor Pool Estate in Birmingham. If you live on the Moor Pool Estate you will receive the 'Moor Pool Duck' delivered to your door. The Duck, edited by Mike Frost, gives an update on Estate matters and is generally published on a monthly basis.

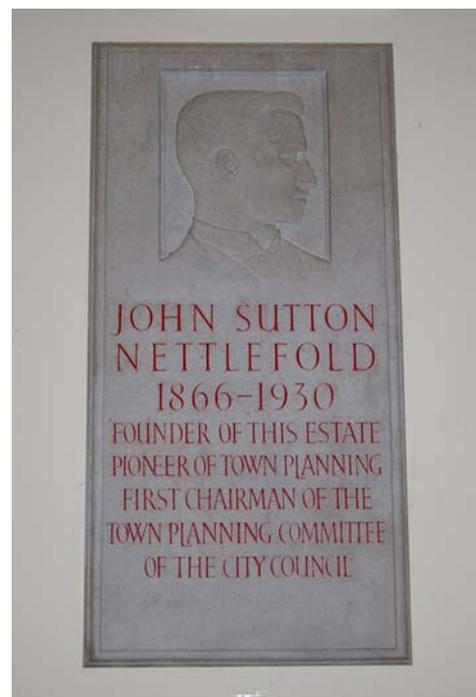
If you don't live here then you probably know very little about Moor Pool, one of Birmingham's secret 'gems'. 'About Moor Pool' will tell you more, giving a fascinating insight into this historic Estate. Few survive now who can remember what it was like before Moor Pool was built, when the local landscape consisted of farms and countryside, with the village of Harborne not even being part of Birmingham.

Without John Nettlefold's

vision and character, Moor Pool could easily have turned into another high density property developers paradise typical elsewhere at the time.

Now is the time to recognise and learn lessons from the success and durability of Moor Pool.

Rob Sutton.



John Nettlefold, who was the founder of the Moor Pool Estate.

Moor Pools Early Days.

In the 1890s, Birmingham was a key city in the Industrial Revolution. The development was haphazard, fuelled by the demands of industry and the need for a vastly increased labour force. The result was back-to-back properties with extremely poor living conditions resulting in many health problems and a short life expectancy. Harborne Tenants was one of the early experiments in town planning and the first of its kind in

Birmingham. Tenants held parts of the Societies capital in the form of shares. The idea was conceived by John Nettlefold, Chairman of the City's Housing Committee and intended as a blueprint for future developments. Many at the time said that it would not work and would fail financially. Instead Moor Pool flourished, infant mortality rates dropped dramatically and the Estate continues to this day.

Moor Pools Centenary.

In 2007, Moor Pool celebrated the centenary of the first sod being cut, by Mrs Margaret Nettlefold on 26th October 1907. For the first event a tea party was hosted in the Moor Pool Hall at which the Lord Mayor, Randal Brew, was the guest of honour. The Moor Pool Players re-enacted the opening ceremony with Norma Mason, the 'players Hon Sec playing

the role of Margaret Nettlefold, using the same inaugural spade. Many of Moor Pool's longstanding residents attended, along with invited guests and local dignitaries. The MRA plan to hold a series of events over the coming years culminating with a main event in 2012 to celebrate 100 years after the final roof tile was laid in Carless Avenue.



The Moor Pool Players re-enact the opening ceremony.

Conservation Comes to Moor Pool?

Following the sale of Harborne Tenants, residents became increasingly worried by examples of inappropriate development on the Estate. Gardens were being dug up and turned into drives. Velux windows added to roofs and various extensions added to properties. Most of these would have been stopped by Harborne Tenants who vigorously enforced the covenants which apply to the Estate. When it was clear that these covenants were not being enforced to the same degree, the MRA decided to seek additional protection in the form of a 4(2) Direction. The MRA went through the

laid down procedures including public meetings and consultation process through Birmingham City Council. In 2006, the 4(2) Direction formally came into force. So far the 4(2) Direction has provided mixed results, lacking a full character appraisal to support it and falling short of the original Harborne Tenants covenants which prevent making any alteration in the external elevation or architectural decoration of the property.

Community Spirit Alive and Well.

The battle to save Moor Pool rekindled a widespread community spirit on the Estate between old and new residents. Older residents often met and chatted together at their weekly visit to the Post Office which was lost in a previous round of closures. To make up for this the Residents Association now hosts a monthly coffee morning in the Moor Pool Lower Hall. At last they have somewhere to meet up again and chat, whilst younger and newer residents can come along with friends and neighbours. In the past the Residents Association used to organise many events, including coach trips and tea parties. This all depends on voluntary help, of course. The MRA will be

continuing the coffee mornings into the foreseeable future and also look to arrange other events if there is sufficient interest and funds allow.



Coffee mornings in the Lower Hall.

Allotment Associations Plans to Restore Allotments.

Allotments are a key feature of the Moor Pool Estate's original design. They allowed tenants the opportunity to grow their own healthy food and provided light and open space far removed from the typical living conditions of the time. 100 years on and the desirability of allotments and their positive health values are recognised by many organisations, including Health Authorities, some of whom are providing financial support. The Moor Pool Allotment Association has a waiting list of over 30 potential plot holders in addition to those who have applied directly to Grainger. With only about 70 plots in total, many of which are threatened by the development proposals, demand far outstrips supply. The MAA is looking at ways to solve this problem, one option being to return areas with lock up garages back to their former allotment

state. Despite chronic on-street parking problems, many of the garages have been allowed to deteriorate to a point they can no longer be used and require replacement which the current landlord has refused to do. The MAA recognises the desperate need for parking, but in the event that these garages disappear, see allotments as the obvious choice whilst restoring the intended architectural integrity as a bonus. The reopening of the Moor Pool brook within the allotments will encourage wildlife and prevent the flooding which occurs periodically.



Proposed Restored Valley Site Allotments

Residents Fight Inappropriate Development.

For many years an outside company, Bradford Property Trust, continued to acquire shares in Harborne Tenants. Eventually a point was reached where a final offer was made and ownership passed to BPT. This was a very significant turning point in Moor Pool's history, as management passed to an outside organisation and the Estate became a vehicle for generating profit.

Subsequently BPT was acquired by Grainger who have a large portfolio of tenanted properties in the UK and Germany. Grainger have made planning applications for development on allotment and garage sites which have caused a storm of protest from tenants and owner occupiers alike. Recognising Grainger's commercial aspirations, the Residents have made various overtures to have talks and discussions to enable a comprehensive master plan to be devised for Moor Pool, all of which so far have been refused.

The carrot of a transfer of community facilities was dangled but with no proper financial study to support it and residents adamant that that the conservation of the Estate was paramount, Grainger reconsidered their initial proposals. Revised plans do not include transfer of community facilities but still strike a blow at the essential character of the Estate and set a dangerous precedent for further development in the future.

Residents feel cheated that having supported the 4(2) Direction it seems possible that modern and inappropriate housing is possible not only in the heart of the Estate but on community open space. Of course, campaigns against development are well known, but the level of opposition from not only residents but outside supporters has been unprecedented.



Culverted brook encourages flash floods.



Moor Pools Architectural Character.

Igor & Tricia Cusack

The Estate was built according to "Garden Suburb" principles. These were based on the nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts movement, which combined sensitive planning with the aim of social reform. The Garden Suburb also drew on new ideas for the "Garden City" which originated in the "ideal housing provided by a few philanthropic industrialists in northern Britain" such as the "proto-Socialist" Robert Owen, who established housing, educational and leisure facilities for his mill-workers in New Lanark, Central Scotland in the 1810s and 1820s . Garden Cities were intended to be self-sufficient economic units, and they were a reaction to the back-to-back housing that excluded light, air, and sunshine from urban dwellings. The idea was to allow fresh air and sunshine to enter every house from all sides. This principle was also taken into account in the interior design of houses. The architects for Garden Cities and Garden Suburbs were invariably well-established and respected as well as innovative. This was the case in Moor Pool as in Letchworth. One of the planners of Letchworth Garden City, Barry Parker,

Park Edge Road.



considered that the houses should not be "modelled in miniature on the houses of the rich" with many small rooms. The houses were to be built so that the rooms were "large enough to be healthy, comfortable and habitable". We can see this in Moor Pool today, where many of the houses have living rooms running from the front to the rear, allowing sunlight to enter at different times of day. Parker also considered that "if your big room is to be comfortable it *must* have recesses. There is great charm in a room broken up in plan, where that slight feeling of mystery is given to it which arises when you cannot see the whole room from any one point in which you are likely to sit; when there is always something *round the corner*". Here on Moor Pool Estate we often have recesses and arches in our rooms - and although not much could be hiding around our corners they certainly add great charm to our rooms. The creator of the term "Garden City", Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928), insisted that it should relate to its chosen site. We can see this in miniature on the Moor Pool with the roads winding around the contours of the gently rolling hills on which the Estate was built and how it was centred round the existing pool and large trees. The Garden Suburbs were intended to improve peoples' physical health and enhance psychological well-being which was being damaged in an urban environment. They were envisaged as



An Example of a Moor Pool Property.



An Example of a Listed Moor Pool Property.

housing for a social mixture of people and, given the class assumptions of the time this led to a combination of larger and smaller houses, as we see on this Estate. The Garden Suburb was also an attempt to bring some of the best features of country living into the city. Arts and Crafts principles included a desire for the buildings to be in harmony with nature, using local materials and looking to vernacular

“If Grainger plan to keep facilities such as the Community Hall and tennis courts in their ownership I sincerely hope that they will maintain them properly and not allow these important community assets to fall into disrepair”.

John Alden, Harborne Councillor.

building. Construction was to be 'honest' with no facings of materials imitating other materials. Houses were designed with traditional pitched roofs and homely chimneys with integral decorative brickwork. Every house should be individually designed - as every house on Moor Pool is slightly different. The design was functional so that windows, for example, fitted their use rather than being showy. The overall effect was "picturesque", avoiding repetitive or symmetrical design. Finally, the Garden Suburb was designed as a whole that is, carefully integrating housing and green spaces and was not therefore intended to have additional buildings stuck in the middle.

The architects for the Moor Pool Estate, Martin and Martin were already well-established in Birmingham. William Martin had worked here and had later formed a practice with J.H. Chamberlain in 1864 . William's son Frederick Martin joined the firm some time after Chamberlain died in 1883. The firm's works included many public buildings, police stations, baths, libraries and 41 board schools, Spring Hill Library, Birmingham School of Art, St John the Evangelist, Sparkhill, and the Moor Pool Estate. Frederick Martin's most famous building was perhaps the former Telephone Exchange Building in Edmund St.

The Estate as an entity is of great architectural interest but in addition, five buildings have been listed as Grade II as shown on Birmingham City Council's *Schedule of Nationally Listed Buildings of Historic Interest*.

A Moor Pool Trust?

The MRA floated the idea of a Trust to maintain Moor Pools community facilities. Recognising that the current landlord Grainger's main interests are in commercial letting, not community halls and bowling greens the MRA instigated discussions on how a trust might function. The key issues were finance and legal framework as any such trust has to be robust enough to survive the next 100 years. Discussions stalled initially because of the cost of a feasibility study. Already Grainger has had discussions with the Moor Pool

Allotment Association on self-management.

In the days of Harborne Tenants the costs of the facilities would be supported by income generated from tenancies. Without this, other ways of funding would need to be found. Rob Sutton, Chair of the MRA is already talking to local Council officials at ways in which the City might support and get benefit from the Estate's facilities.

The Moor Pool Regeneration Group.

The MRG was initiated by the MRA to look at ways to regenerate the Estate which since the demise of Harborne Tenants has shown a marked decline. They would also act as a forum to discuss proposals from Grainger re improvements to Moor Pool. Their first task was a survey which showed many differences to the data provided by Graingers own consultants. Without a positive response to offers of

discussions on the new housing and with the removal of the transfer of community facilities the MRG have been heavily involved in assessing the Grainger planning applications and formulating a robust and technically detailed objection to them. The MRG has looked at a variety of issues including parking, ecology, garage use, children's play areas and demographics. They have discovered some fascinating information besides data relative to the planning applications. For instance the average length of time people have lived on the Estate is 30.1 years which is remarkable with the longest at 87 years.

At the 2008 MRA AGM the MRG was unanimously voted to continue for

(Continued on page 9)



One of the areas needing restoration.

(Continued from page 8)

another 12 months, testimony to the hard work and results of their endeavours. Further information about the MRG and the plans for the Moor

Who Are Grainger?

Firstly and perhaps most important to understand is that Grainger still own approximately 160 or so houses on the Estate. They also own and are responsible for the upkeep of all the community facilities such as the Hall, pool, Estate offices, allotments, tennis courts, builders yard, lock up garages and all those little paths which wind through the Estate and past the back of gardens. Besides that they are also a major property company with approximately £2.6bn of assets and £3.5bn of assets under management. A FTSE 250 Company, Grainger owns, acquires and trades regulated and market let tenanted properties and has substantial interests in home reversions and co-investment vehicles. The

“As we are no longer carrying out a large scale proposal we are unable to carry out significant refurbishment to the Hall”.

Tim Nicholson.

Pool Estate are on the MRG website.
www.Moorpool.org.uk

Company also undertakes fund and asset management, property management and residential development.

They have expanded considerably in recent years with the property boom and in Birmingham have made a major investment in East Side at Curzon Street. Through Grainger's collaborative (50:50) agreement with Development Securities this 10 acre site in Central Birmingham was acquired in December 2006. Scheme design is progressing with infrastructure works scheduled to commence in late 2008. It has an estimated GDV of £370m. Most of their assets are reversionary in nature. This means that there is an inherent gain outside of normal capital appreciation or rent which will be delivered through vacancy or from asset enhancements they undertake, for example, through obtaining planning permission. Established in Newcastle in 1912, Grainger directly owns over 14,000 properties in the UK and 7,000 in Germany. It also manages a further 3,600 properties through co-investment vehicles.

Data courtesy of Grainger website.

Clubs and Societies.

Moor Pool has always had many clubs and societies. These include a tennis club, bowling green, indoor skittles alley, fishing club, a rifle range (used by the Home Guard during WW II) snooker club and a respected amateur theatrical society 'The Moor Pool Players'. Specific facilities were included in the Estate for these clubs. The Moor Pool News of 1910 also lists a Boys Athletics Club, Cycling Club, Horticultural Society, Social Club and Coal Club, all of which have fallen by the wayside over time, whilst new ones such as the Moor Pool Allotment Association have been formed to look after the interests of the allotments and plot holders.

The Clubs and Societies not only serve a social function but actively work to maintain facilities which would

otherwise fall into disrepair.

Many club members live outside the Estate showing that the facilities provide more than a local function. The Circle Tennis Club provides junior coaching which is well attended. The Hall hosts dance and keep fit classes as well as rehearsal facilities for the Moor Pool Players.



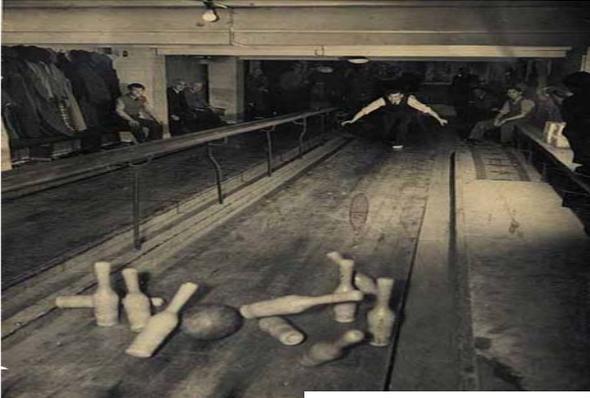
Moor Pools Bowling Green.

Moor Pools Bowls and Skittle Clubs.



Moor Pools rare indoor bowling alleys

Situated deep below the Moor Pool hall is a club which even some residents have never seen. This is the Moor Pool Indoor Skittles Club. Unusually one of the 2 wooden lanes has a rounded crowned surface and is reckoned to be one of two left in the country. With woods of various sizes the game requires additional skills from its enthusiastic members. Sadly after 100 years the foundations of the lanes are starting to break up and will require a major fundraising exercise. We hope that by the end of the centenary celebrations a fully refurbished skittles alley will be completed, ready for the next 100 years.



Early days!

Original woods.



Moor Pool: The Next 100 Years.

Moor Pool is a shining example of what can be achieved with proper planning and concern for the environment. As such it is an important historical example in Birmingham's chequered building and development program which sees the mistakes made in the 1960's now being demolished. Moor Pool not only deserves increased protection but it also has to be given the recognition it deserves and used as an example 100 years on of good planning principles. Sadly over the years Moor Pool has been forgotten and lost amongst the rapid expansion of Harborne as it became a fully fledged part of the City of Birmingham.

The Estate cannot stand still and many occupiers are investing heavily in their properties with re-laid roofs, wiring and up to date approved double glazing. Moor Pool has a strong community spirit with many residents still having family connections with the original tenants who moved here. Despite this Moor Pool has reached a key point in its life where commercial interest could be allowed to jeopardise the integrity of the Estate. This must be resisted at all costs and all parties work together to ensure Moor Pool not only continues but remains an important and recognised part of Birmingham's history.



Moor Pools Bowling Green in winter.

About Moor Pool

Rob Sutton. 64, Margaret Grove, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 9JL. Phone 0121 426 5669

Dates for your Diary.

- 31.1.09 Coffee Morning. Moor Pool Lower Hall.
28.2.09 Coffee Morning. Moor Pool Lower Hall.

Local Contact Details.

Grainger.	0161 929 0044
Moor Pool Hall (Bookings).	0121 428 4644
The Circle Tennis Club.	07950 013 344
The Moor Pool Tennis Club.	0121 426 1141
Moor Pool Bowling Club.	0121 427 3180 0121 427 3415 (ladies)
Harborne Tenants' Snooker Club.	0121 472 8211 or 0121 427 4200
Moor Pool Fishing Club.	0121 472 2617
Moor Pool Air Rifle & Pistol Club.	0121 427 3618
Moor Pool Players Amateur Theatre Company.	0121 427 6795 or 0121 426 2134
Moor Pool Skittles Club.	0121 427 5051
Moor Pool Allotment Association.	0121 426 5669

Moor Pool Residents Association Subscription.

£5 per household, £3 per individual

The subscription supports printing of the Moor Pool Duck. It also assists with the running of community events, helping residents and looking after the long term interests of Moor Pool.