

# History Trail

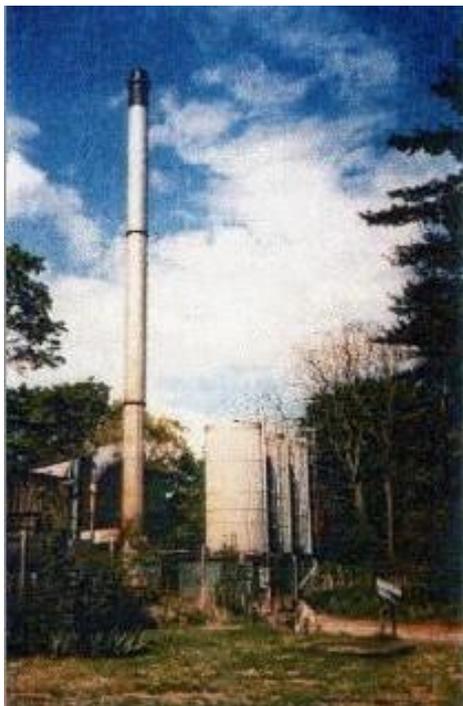
## Point 14 – The Village Green



This was once an excellent recreation ground, with a good cricket table, a pavilion and a circular path to allow patients to exercise or be wheeled round by relatives or friends. A club house was built on the northern boundary after the pavilion fell into decay. This also became abandoned and the recreation ground overgrown. It is alleged that eventually St Albans Fire Service burnt the club down to practice fire-fighting skills. Parts of the circular path and the surrounding iron fence can still be seen.



Village Green bottom left. Source unknown but possibly pre-WW2



New boilers at back of hospital near cricket green 1980's. (Courtesy Museums of St Albans)

*".....other side was the cricket pitch. It was very well maintained by the garden staff. A chain gang used to go around with Old Jock in a flat hat and a little home-made cigarette which he never smoked just hanging out of his mouth, leading the group. In front was a chap in a green boiler suit and little wellies and another chap at the back. They get as far as the bin – Jock said 'stop' one at back gets bin, empties it and one in front puts it back". (HE DoEM)*

*"The Boiler House which stood on Village Green – absolute disaster. Authorities put in a small boiler house at Cell Barnes hospital then pumped steam half a mile". (HE Building Manager)*



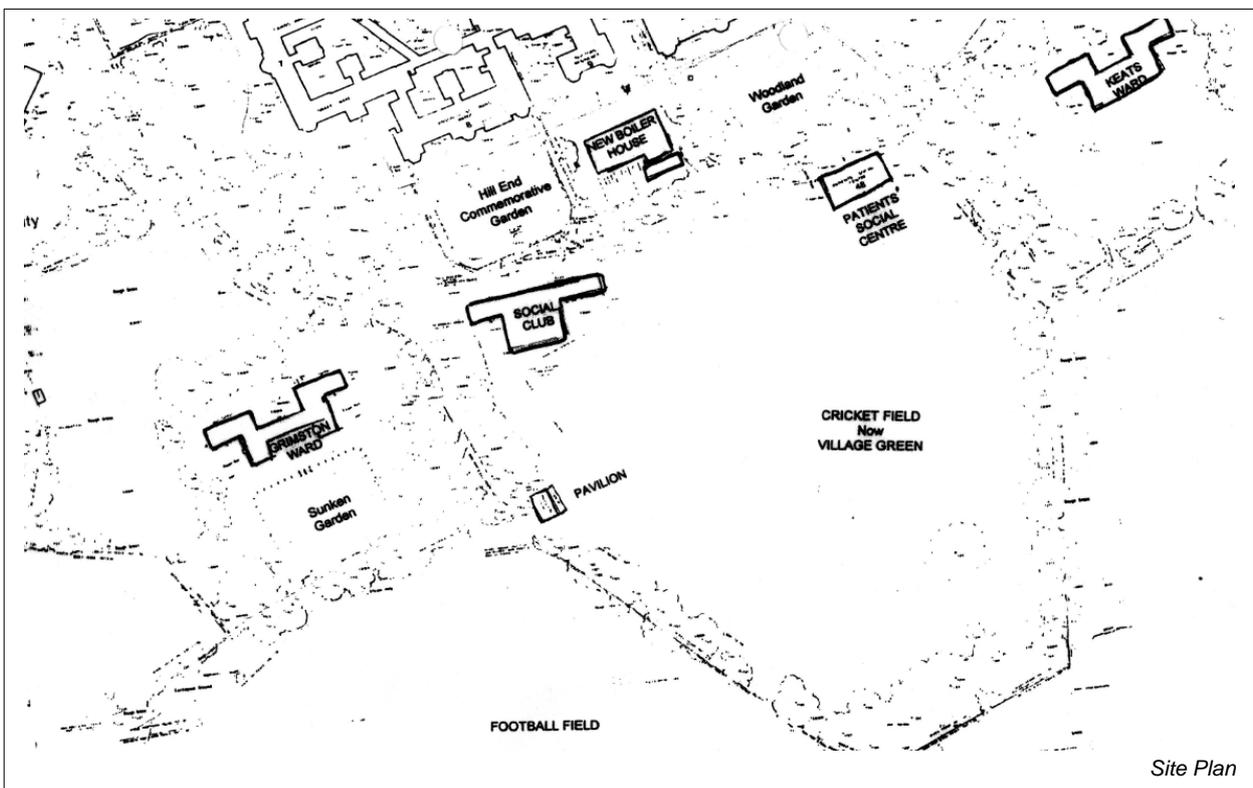
Boiler chimney centre: Village Green to right with Social Club – date unknown (Courtesy of J. Whittamore)

*“For men there were the outdoor sports of football, cricket and bowls but apparently nothing outdoors for women. The summer garden fete was attended by 656 patients”. (B. Anderson)*

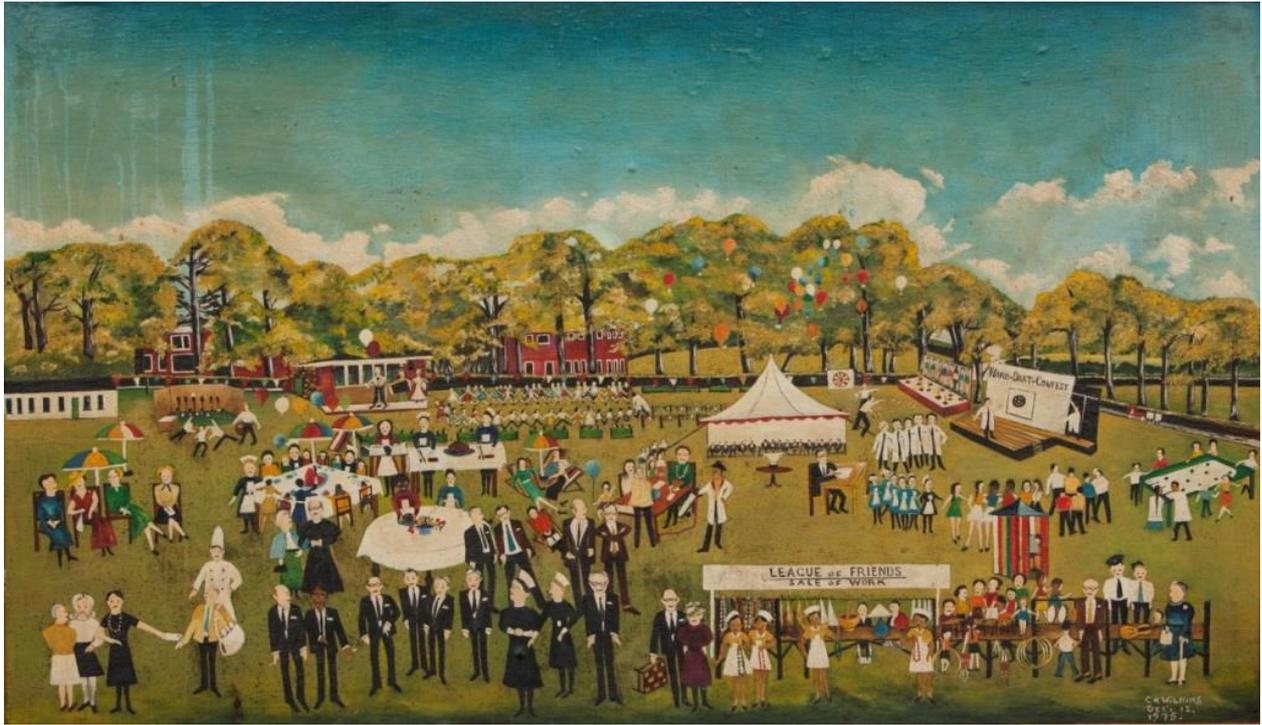


*Hill End Cricket Team 1937 (Courtesy of Museums of St Albans)*

*“On the cricket ground (now the Village Green) there was the patients social club at one end and the staff club at the other end plus the cricket pavilion. Due to the decommissioning, the hospital secretary told me to fill the pavilion with old furniture and said it would be set alight. The local fire service wanted a training area so one night there was a blaze and the fire brigade were there to put it out.” (HE Senior Staff)*



*Site Plan*



Original painting now hangs in the Highfield Park Trust offices.

*“The patient who painted the Summer Fete picture was Herbert Wilkins – though signed as C.H. Wilkins. He was deaf but played the cello and had a piece of wood on top of the cello near his ear. Mind you – you couldn’t sit and listen for long!”. (HE Senior Staff)*