

Cambridge Folk Museum
Spring Exhibition, 1975
“H. A. Moden—Cambridge Cartoonist”

HARRY ALLEN MODEN was born on 23 June, 1881, at *The Wheatsheaf*, 69 St. Andrew's Street, which was kept by his father, Henry Moden, brewer. It stood on the site of the present Lilley & Skinner's Shoe Shop. *The Wheatsheaf* closed in 1883 and the Moden family went to live, for a time, in Chesterton before moving to *The Wheatsheaf*, 3 Market Hill. On leaving St. Luke's School in 1895, Harry Moden worked, first, for a local estate agent and then, in 1905, went as general clerk to the Saxon Cement Company in Mill road. He left the Company in 1907 and moved to the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company where he became buyer and stores manager. Here he stayed until, in 1936, he retired to devote himself to his two great interests – gardening and fishing. He died, aged 79, on 20 January, 1960.

IT WAS in the period 1903 to 1914 that Harry Moden worked as an artist and cartoonist. With no formal art training, he spent all his spare time sketching humorous incidents in University and Town life and publishing them as postcards for sale in local shops. His work was known in Oxford, too, for he produced several cartoons of undergraduate life in that University for sale by G. Davis, the Cornmarket stationer.

On Mondays – and on Wednesdays, too, if there was a mid-week change of programme – he went to the New Theatre in Cambridge and made silhouette sketches of the caste of each production. This was in the hey-day of the great musical comedies. These sketches he sold for two shillings each to local stationers. He also designed menu cards, programme covers for Town and University amateur dramatic societies, sketches for the *Cambridge Chronicle* and other periodicals, and advertisements for local firms. He even planned a series of advertisements for national products such as Sunlight Soap, Becham's Pills, etc.

THE LONG hours spent over a drawing board, at the end of a day's work affected his health and in 1914 his doctor advised him to take more outdoor exercise. He at once gave up his home in Humberstone Road, where he had lived since his marriage in 1908, and moved to the new house he had built in Milton Road. From then on he did no more drawings, with the exception of a postcard, published for the Armistice celebrations in Cambridge in 1918, and a design for the menu card of the annual dinner of the Cambridge Angling Club in 1939, though this may have been produced from an earlier sketch. Nor did he ever speak of his work. Contemporaries who worked with him at the Cambridge Scientific Company have said that they never associated the Harry Moden they knew with the black and white cartoons which were so popular in Cambridge early in this century.

The Museum is grateful to Dr. F. G. Friedlander [*son-in-law of Harry Allen Moden*] for kindly lending most of the original material on exhibition.