

# HATFIELD THIS CENTURY

Hatfield People Explore Their History Since 1900

No. 22

**NEWSLETTER**

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## *Hatfield Carnival*

On 29th June we showed the flag at Birchwood playing field as part of Hatfest week. In spite of gale force winds we managed to erect a mini- marquee to display local photographs, publications etc., which attracted considerable interest from members of the public. Thanks are extended to those members who gave their time and effort to this venture.

## *An Evening of Nostalgic Reminiscences*

By popular request, your committee has arranged for another display of local view slides by Ron Kingdon. This will be at St Michael's Church Hall, Birchwood on Wednesday 9th October at 8pm. Admission will be 50p but members will be welcomed free. Don't forget that Pat Sherrard will try to organise lifts for those members without transport. Contact her on 265062. We look forward to seeing you and your friends.

## *Archaeological Workshop*

We are grateful to Sue Kirby, curator of the museum, for making available to us the archives of the defunct Hatfield and District Archaeological Society which are stored at Mitt Green. Although the excavations are mainly of much older vintage the work was carried out during this century so comes within our remit. Wendy Parry of the museum staff will be running a workshop at the museum on Thursday 21st November. Due to space limitations only six places will be available so it will be a case of 'first come first served'. Return the attached slip to me at the above address to reserve your place. There will be no charge to members. Due to the anticipated interest in this Wendy has agreed to hold other sessions at later dates, if necessary.

## *The Origins of Hatfield Street Names*

In December 1994 it was suggested that we might look into the origin of street names. With the help of various members it has been possible to compile a fairly comprehensive booklet of nearly 100 names in 17 pages. Hot off the press we have our first printing! Copies are now available at £1 each inclusive of postage. Send me your order with cheque made out to Hatfield This Century for your first edition.

## *Your Stories Wanted*

Help me keep these Newsletters interesting. Other members would like to hear of your experiences and life in Hatfield. Edited drafts can be returned for approval. Please share your stories with us!

## Dedication of War Memorial

Extracted from the Herts Advertiser  
by Brian Lawrence

Having decided on the form and location of the memorial in March 1919 its erection was delayed and more than two years elapsed before it was dedicated.

It was on the afternoon of Sunday 12 June 1921 that a large crowd assembled along the Great North Road despite threatening rain to witness the ceremonial dedication.

Invitations to the enclosure of the memorial garden had to be restricted to immediate relations of those who were commemorated and the large body of ex-servicemen from the parish.

A procession consisting of the band, choir, Bishop of Exeter and clergy proceeded from the Public Hall to be joined at the park gates by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Hampden, Lord Salisbury, Sir Hildred Carlisle and Col. Halsey - The service opened with the singing of "For All The Saints".

Before unveiling the memorial Lord Hampden gave an eloquent speech in which he reminded those present that they were gathered there on the anniversary of the Battle of Ypres, where so many of the men of the neighbourhood gave their lives. The Bishop of Exeter then dedicated the cross and was followed by Lord Salisbury who read the Roll of Honour. After the Last Post and Reveille were sounded relations of the 140 men from the parish commemorated on the memorial came forward to lay their wreaths at the foot of the cross.

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## COUNTESS ANNE'S SCHOOL

By Jennie Stockbridge

Abridged from Hertfordshire Countryside April 1995

Countess Anne's School was at the very top of Back Street. It was rather neatly tucked away next to the lodge into Hatfield Park and facing across to the church so that the contact with both its patrons and its governing body was very close.

The school building consisted of one large room partitioned by high folding screens which were pushed back each morning for assembly. A door height corridor ran beside the first two classrooms so that each room could be completely separate. There was no ceiling, just the rafters way up in the roof. All the windows were high up in the walls. They let in plenty of light but there was no view - only the branches of the chestnut trees in the churchyard traced against the sky.

The windows were opened by means of a pull cord and often stuck. When they were opened in the summer we often had small birds up in the rafters and on occasions there were bats flitting around. The classroom walls were a dirty grey stone colour at the top and the fashionable 'ginger' stained wood matching the partitions lower down. The floors were dark creosoted wood with many knots, worn shiny by the boots and shoes of many generations of children. Despite all this I do not remember finding it an oppressive or dismal place and at least in my earliest years there we had plenty of space, in winter the rooms

were lit by gas lamps. These often caused problems. Either they would not light properly or they blew back. This always caused squeals, though I don't think we were really frightened, I think those lamps were a source of concern to our teachers.

There were central heating radiators though they had such a cavernous space to heat that the school was often chilly and in really cold weather the heating was supplemented with old fashioned upright paraffin heaters. At one end of the building there was a stone floored cloakroom with a row of washbasins along one wall and a small kitchen at the other end. The cloakroom always smelled strongly of carbolic soap. The toilets led off the cloakroom and were semi-covered. They had a roof and covered walkway but the sides of the walkway were open above shoulder height which made them cold and sometimes quite wet but at least they remained reasonably wholesome.

The playground had many delights. There were two large trees to sit under in summer. At one side the ground sloped steeply to make lovely slides on frosty days.

### Dates for your Diary

9 October

Hatfield As It Was

21 November

HADAS Workshop

30 November

Items for December Newsletter