

Hatfield Local History Society

Formerly Hatfield This Century

No. 35

NEWSLETTER

December 1999

SECRETARY: Mrs. C. Martindale.
EDITOR: F.J.Cox, 23 Home Meadow.

Editorial....

We have to thank the committee and Chris Martindale in particular for a most successful programme of meetings this past three months.

The talk on Wellfield Hospital and the subsequent Trust evoked many memories of the care taken of our elderly lady neighbours, and the continuing help which is available to our needy locals. Thanks are extended to Margaret Tyler for an informative and pleasant afternoon.

In spite of problems with the blackout, the slide pictures of Mill Green presented by Gordon Mills with running commentary by Sid Holton, were very well received. As a follow on to this, Sid has offered to arrange a walk around the hamlet when the weather is suitable.

In November Elizabeth Menzies, ably assisted by Michael Brilliant, recounted her role in the publication of Victor Mills' records of the magistrates court.

Apropos of this, extracts from the book relating to the building are included in another column.

There will be no meeting in January but Dick Busby will give an illustrated talk on Brass Rubbing on the 14 February at 2.30.

Ron Kingdon will present a slide show of New Hatfield at 7.30 on 13 March.

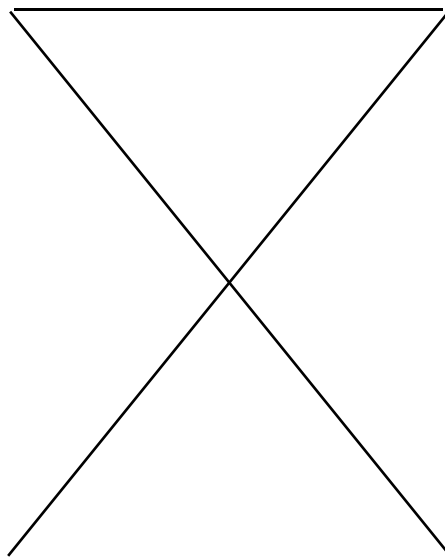
Our AGM at 7.30 on May 8 will be followed by a talk with slides on the Cecil Family and Hatfield House by Robin Perkins a guide at Hatfield House for 12 years. This will be held at Oxlease Hall.

Our annual outing will be a tour of North Mymms House on Saturday 24 June at 10.30am.

Don't forget, if you need transport to any of our meetings Pat Sherrard will try to arrange a lift for you

Thank you for the kind comments regarding the Newsletter, but we do need your stories and articles to make it interesting to other members.

Editor



I Lived There..... 2

I was brought into the world in the brick and slate roofed house which had two rooms up and two down and adjoined the first "Boar and Castle" pub in St. Albans Road in the original Newtown, Hatfield.

I have left it too late for many happenings to be remembered vividly, although some things stick in one's mind. Our closet was in an out-house across a cobbled yard at the back of the house. In there it was full of cobwebs and dark, even in daylight hours. Water was not piped to the house nor to the out-house. I recall a bucket was filled with water from a pump in the yard with which to flush the lavatory. This would suggest that waste disposal was to a cess pit. Pumping water seems to have been the norm for in my grandfather's house in the 3rd Right-of-Way a pump was installed in the scullery - they used not to refer to such space as a kitchen in those days. Life was primitive by modern standards and with that kind of sanitation, the considerable use of horse transport and sheep and cattle droving being a common occurrence, flies abounded. One recalls the revolting sight of them caught and stuck on sticky fly papers, or lured by vinegar and other temptations into other kinds of trap, there to meet their death. Lighting was by paraffin lamps and candles despite the presence of a gas works in the original French Horn Lane.

Extracted from "A Childhood and Youth in Hatfield between the Wars" by H.J.Gray Obtainable on loan from Hatfield Library Local Studies Section.

Hatfield Court House

In 1895 the Joint Standing Committee of the Hatfield Petty Sessions, of which Charles Longmore was secretary, recommended that a Petty Sessional court house be built in Hatfield adjoining the police headquarters at an estimated cost of £1000. The contract was awarded to Henry Norris a Hertford builder. The cost was to be paid by a loan from Messrs. Sharples of Hertford to be repaid over 30 years at 3.5% interest.

In 1936 the County Council planned a new court house in Hatfield on the other side of the St. Albans Road. The architects were Robert Atkinson of Manchester.

The last meeting in the old Court House took place on the 14th August 1939 and the first sitting of the new one was on the 28th August.

One of the better examples in Hertfordshire of public architecture of the thirties, the new court house was designed

in the classical Georgian style.

One Journalist wrote that it resembled the new County Hall built at the same time. The building had an additional courtroom for the Juvenile Court off which was an antechamber leading to the magistrates' retiring room, to the right of this was the main court room.

The Welwyn Times reported that the room was comfortably furnished with other rooms set aside for the police, counsel, solicitors, probation officers and male and female witnesses. The main courtroom was more imposing than in the old court house and tiers of public seats could accommodate many more people.

The 1944 VI flying bomb badly damaged the court house which was not finally repaired until 1952.

Serious deterioration to the building became apparent in 1987. For a number of years cracks in the ceiling of Court Two had developed to the

extent that plaster had begun to fall. In March 1987 the court house was closed and the work of the Hatfield Court was transferred to St. Albans while repairs were carried out.

Following completion of repairs the court resumed at Hatfield until the final sitting of the Hatfield Bench on 26th and 27th March 1998. By the summer the courthouse was in use by Carlton TV to film episodes of "Kavanagh QC".

The building was rejected as a candidate for listing by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport acting on the advice of English Heritage in September 1998 following an application by Hatfield Town Council. In 1999 for a few months the building was used as a temporary court house while the St. Albans court house was refurbished.

Information generally extracted from "Open and Local Justice" by E. A. Menzies, based on the research of Victor Mills.

**14 February
2.30 pm**

**BRASS RUBBING
IN MID HERTS**

An Illustrated Talk

by

Richard Busby

at the

Bill Salmon Centre

Coming Soon

a talk on the Cecil Family
and Hatfield House by Robin
Perkins

a conducted tour of North
Mymms House

Wanted

Your stories, memories,
comments, suggestions,
articles etc.
to share with
other members.

**13 March
7.30 pm**

NEW HATFIELD

A Slide Show

by

Ron Kingdon

at the

Bill Salmon Centre