

SECRETARY: Mrs. C. Martindale
EDITOR: Mr. F.J.Cox

Editorial.....

No excuse is made for reprinting the local newspaper report of 50 years ago when we were all celebrating the Coronation. Let us look forward to the next - diamond - jubilee and hope that the civic commemorations will be as joyous with better weather.

35 members attended the AGM on May 13th despite atrocious weather. Brian Lawrence chaired the meeting and reported on the various activities undertaken this past year together with notice of events programmed for the coming year. Isobel Cox presented the accounts and treasurer's report.

Joan Cobern and Jim Parker were nominated and elected onto the committee. Thanks were extended to John Pennington as retiring committee member and to Pat Sherrard who will revert to co-opted minute secretary.

Thanks were also expressed to Chris Martindale for arranging speakers and venue for our meetings and to Heather and Maurice Richardson for auditing the accounts.

Following the formal business Eric Sherrard presented a talk, well illustrated by slides of "The Lost Buildings of Hatfield", with an appeal - reported elsewhere - for historic news and pictures of recent changes in the town.

A new innovation, notelets depicting drawings by Beresford Johnson, in packs of six with envelopes, prepared by Brian, and available at £1 per pack in aid of Society funds were promptly sold out!

Local History Day was marked by a display of photographs and audio tapes at Mill Green Museum manned by members of the committee on Sunday 12th May.

Family Successes at the Hatfield Show

By Shirley Knapp

My father used to tell me about the Hertfordshire Agricultural show which was held in Hatfield Park as far back as the 1890s.

My grand parents, John and Lucy Cochrane of Lemsford used to exhibit flowers, fruit and vegetables at the show and were successful for many years in winning prizes. Their sideboard was covered with silver cups! They also exhibited their Rhode Island Red cockerels as there was a livestock competition as well. My father and his brother, as children, used to look forward to the time when Farmer Horn would drive his cattle and other animals past their cottage at Valley Road corner just before the show in Hatfield Park. They used to chalk a line across the road and take bets on which animal would be first over the line.

The greasy pole competition was another enjoyable event for them. My father's brother, William, often won the prize in spite of the fact that he had only one hand. In 1898 my great grandfather, Robert Cochrane, won second prize in a ploughing contest - the prize was 18s. 6d. (92p)!

THESE YOU HAVE LOVED THE LOST BUILDINGS OF HATFIELD

The recent history of Hatfield has been one of turmoil and change. Following upon the expansion of the First New Town when old Hatfield, centred upon the church and estate, saw major development across the railway a period of relative calm settled on the area until the advent of de Havilland's and the Barnet by Pass. Even this could be considered as evolution rather than change, with the Birchwood, Garden Village, Selwyn and Bramble areas being built

on farmland. But come the war and the need to house the overflow from London, Hatfield New Town was born. Not only was the "south end" of Hatfield built upon existing farm land but the old Newtown was demolished in the cause of development.

Many local people can recall the Rights of Way, the Robin Hood, Boar and Castle, White Lion and Gun pubs, not forgetting the Prince of Wales, shops owned by Charlie Moore, John Tingey, Hulks the baker and more. Such nostalgia - such memories!

But now the replacements are being replaced. Woolco has disappeared, The Forum is no more, the water features of the market place have given way to shrubberies, and so on and so on. Plans are afoot to make sweeping changes to this part of the town. Possibly great improvements to come. But among all these changes it is becoming more difficult to keep track of what things were like before the planners had their way. This was the point of a talk given by Eric Sherrard at one of our recent meetings. We need to find and preserve information relating to these changes. We tend to take it for granted that records will be available in the future when we, or our children, need them.

Let us go through photograph collections, newspaper cuttings, etc. to preserve what is now news, for tomorrow's history.

Don't just centre on the areas mentioned above, think of the other changes, in Old Hatfield, at Hilltop, the Hatfield Tunnel, Jack Oldings and the Box Factory, the airfield and the University.

"Hatfield voices" recorded the 1950s and '60s. Let us start collecting photographs, slides, cine films etc. of our more recent changes and perhaps that could be presented as a permanent record of change.

Do we have a volunteer to lead and co-ordinate such a project?

50 YEARS AGO

Hatfield's Coronation Garden Carnival Entrants Undaunted by Weather

At sunrise on Coronation day, the yellow and gold civic flag of Hatfield Rural Council was hoisted above the council offices in St. Albans-road.

The flag fluttered out on a light breeze, and the Chairman of the council, Mr. A. Bennie, who performed the ceremony, invited the vice-Chairman, Mr. A. J. McKenzie, the Clerk, Mr. E. F. Cull, ladies, and council officials to toast the Queen's health.

At mid-morning, a small group at the junction of St. Albans and Wellfield-roads saw the Parish Council Coronation garden opened by the oldest inhabitant, Mrs. E. Panter.

Mr. Bennie, who is also Chairman of the parish council, stood by the lovely wrought-iron gates made by the late Mr. G. D. Lovell.

Mrs. Panter then slipped a ribbon from the gate, declaring the garden open. The Rector, Rev. S. B. Woods, said prayers.

As the carnival procession came up the hill towards Howe Dell school sports field soon after 4 p.m. on Coronation day, the wind whipped the flags on the decorated vehicles, and the men, women and children riding in them looked blue with the cold.

The procession was led by carnival "giants," followed by the Bedford Trades Silver Prize Band, in uniforms of red and gold.

"H.M.S. Britannia," a trim craft manned by the Church Youth Fellowship, received a special cheer as it passed, towing the diminutive "H.M.S. Prince Charles." There were lorries garlanded with flowers, and one with keen youngsters demonstrating health and fitness.

A council lorry, brightened with special Coronation wheels trundled along in the procession. "Pirates" manned an imposing galleon, and there was a "St. George and the Dragon" on foot, and mobile.

De Havilland's wonderful tableau of a Comet in flight was greatly admired, and so was a spectacular cowboy coach.

People smiled wryly at a pram bearing a placard: "Trips to Mill Green Pier, 2s. 6d."

Prizewinners

Prizewinners in the procession were—Trades group: 1, F. J. Hollier; 2, Hatfield Dyers and Cleaners; 3, Truck Parts. Merit prize: J. C. Shephard. Social group: 1. 20-35 Club; 2, Hatfield Church Youth Fellowship, 3, 1st Hatfield Senior Scouts. Merit prizes: Hatfield Youth Centre, British Legion women's section, Royal Air Force Association. Fancy dress: 1, Miss Sutterby; 2, Sydney Neale; 3, Paul Bigby.

Two unknown competitors, "Bonny Baby" and "A Health Unto Her Majesty," have not yet claimed their prizes.

Results of the adults races were:
Ladies sack race: 1, Mrs. Denchfield; 2, Mrs. Saunders. Men's sack race: 1. J. Charlton; 2, J. Allan: Ladies' egg-and-spoon: 1, Mrs. Brown; 2, Mrs. Borrill. Veterans' race: 1. Mr. L. F. Cull; 2, Mr. F. W. Cull. Three-legged race: 1, Mr. S. Cull and Mrs. Padgett; 2, Mr. J Perry and Miss B. Harrison.

Mr. H. E. Stanford, Chairman of the Coronation Committee thanked all who had helped with the arrangements, and Mrs. Stanford presented the prizes.

Later in the evening, the bonfire was lighted and fireworks were let off by members of the Guild of Old Scouts.

Supper for Old Folk

An entertainment and supper for 310 Hatfield residents over 65, was provided by the Coronation Committee at the Technical College on Wednesday. Pupils of Miss Staniforth's School of Dancing gave a charming display, lasting nearly two hours.

DATES

For Your Diary

10 June

Visit to Much Hadham
Museum and Forge

15 June

Hatfest Carnival

5 August 7pm

Open Members' Meeting
Mill Green Museum
Refreshments
Guided Mill Green Trail Walk
Possible pre-view of new
museum building

9 September 7.30pm

Recent Work of the
Hertfordshire Archaeological
Trust
Talk by Lee Prosser
Swim Centre

14 October 2.30pm

Straw Plaiting Industry
In St. Albans
Talk by Anne Wheeler
Curator St. Albans City Museum
Swim Centre

11 November 7.30pm

Slides of Old Hatfield and Film of
Building Bridge In
French Horn Lane
By Philip Porter
Swim Centre

9 December 2.30pm

Open Meeting

MY NAÏVETÉ AT THE AGE OF 16

By Stan. Clayton

My family migrated from Manchester in 1935 and I started work in the de Havilland factory in 1936 but for Rumbolds who manufactured and fitted all of the upholstery into each DH aircraft. I only stayed with them for about six months because I soon realised that the manufacture was carried out in their London factory and the men at Hatfield only fitted it into the aircraft. So I left, but not before I had negotiated another job within the factory. Jobs were plentiful in Hatfield at that time.

I joined de Havillands as a shop boy in the Experimental department. This shop was producing a four engined aircraft made mostly of wood, called the Albatross or DH91. My superintendent was Reg Barton who was a friend of my family. We lived in Crawford Road and most of the people living there worked for de Havilland. A few doors away lived Mr. Dawson a sheet metal work superintendent but not in my shop. As we walked to work each day I would deliberately catch him up then we would walk together along the road, across a field, cross the single carriage Barnet by Pass to the main gate. There he would go his way and I would go mine.

Being a shop boy I was the 'gofer' for our section - go for this and go for that anywhere within the factory. So now and then I would come across Mr. Dawson. I would say "hello" or "good afternoon" and expect him to at least reply. He would look at me and walk past and say nothing. This hurt me and I thought I had done something wrong. Eventually I told my father who was a turner in the toolroom. He explained to me that there were 'them' and then there were 'us', and they expected respect at all times. In fact he said "When I was your age we had to call them 'Sir'. I know times have changed but they still wish to stay aloof from the men on the shop floor. They can speak to you but if you want to say anything to them it has to be through your charge hand first."

During my 51 years within that factory, Mr. Dawson along with 23 sheet metal workers were killed in my shop - known as the 94 shop - in 1940 when it was bombed by a Junkers 88, which was subsequently shot down.

FLYING BOMB or "DOODLEBUG"

By "Doc" Watson

Things had been going along fairly peacefully, for wartime, that is, when one night, my Guvnor, the distaff one, having put the family to bed, rang the bell and off we went also. I cannot remember if we were woken or not yet asleep when we heard the sound of a motorcycle in the sky, whereupon we did the foolish thing and went to the window to have a look, a sheer waste of time as outside was as black as ink apart from the flashes over towards Essex and the coast. I should say we had no shelters and, since the house stood on a hill facing roughly south east, we could see Southend way.

Although we had not heard one before we guessed it was a "Doodlebug", the engine cut out as it looked down at us then, as we hit the floor, started up again, thankfully, and went on into the distance, coughing and spluttering until it faded out altogether and a few seconds later we heard an almighty bang in the distance obviously some miles into Herts.

So we went to bed little dreaming it had landed a couple of hundred yards from where I am sitting to write this, at the back of the old Police Headquarters, in the playground of the school opposite.

As I had come to expect, I was called in to the Guvnor's office the next morning and ordered to take a car load of the lads and go over to H.Q. to lend a hand in getting the buildings back into some state of repair so that H.Q. could get back to their tea making. There were, at the time, two rows of houses adjoining the main H.Q. complex and these seemed to have caught most of the blast. The ones on St. Albans Road were subsequently pulled down and large Nissen Huts were built in their place. The others disappeared and in later years with the building of the new road, ended up as a car park leaving only the CC's house and two others in the H.Q. yard, to be patched up and later reoccupied, one of them, in the days of Radio 2VH, by my family and me. This house lost a lot of tiles but I knew nothing of that in those days, and did not hear another "Doodlebug". I think our RAF lads got good at blowing them up in flight.

Later on again. I stood outside the Post Office at Bishops Stortford and heard a bang which shook the pavement. A cloak of silence always descended over these things but murder will out, and it was rumoured to have been one of the new V2 rockets, no motor, no sign of their coming, they just arrived with a hole to prove it.

TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES OF HATFIELD - 1

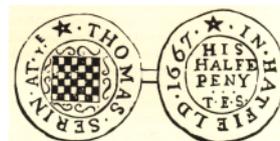
A wide range of industries has existed in Hatfield from the late Medieval period (after the Norman conquest, 1066) to the present day. The 20th Century industries are in the main still with us and will not therefore be included in this treatise. The biggest industry, farming, is a very broad subject and is well covered in the Hatfield and Its People booklet, no. 9, "Farming Yesterday and Today".

BREWING

Most Medieval houses and farms brewed their own ale and brewing was one of the domestic tasks of the Medieval housewife. Each Medieval inn or large private house was supplied by its own brewery since ale, the major drink of the period would not travel without souring.

Dutch or Flemish settlers introduced beer flavoured with hops, in the 14th Century and a Flemish family called Searancke lived in Essendon in the 16th Century.

In the 17th Century, Thomas Searancke (or Serin) was landlord of the Chequers Inn (No. 1, Park Street, Old Hatfield). The existing building is early 17th Century in date but the original Chequers is known to date from 1490. Thomas Serin issued the Chequers halfpenny, a sort of token money which could be exchanged for goods in the inn. The Chequers halfpenny bears a chequerboard emblem and is dated 1667. One is held in the museum.



Continued overleaf

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ANOTHER JUBILEE



Photograph of bonfire built on the north side of the cricket pitch in Hatfield Park to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the reign of King George V in 1935.

Bob Cochrane is standing on top of the fire, while the man standing at the bottom on the left (wearing a cap) is George ("Trotty") Farmer. The man on the right (wearing a hat) is Dick Potterell. All worked for the Forestry Department and built the bonfire.

At the base of the heap three or four tunnels lead into the centre so that there would be a good draught whichever way the wind was blowing - hence the triangular entrance.

Information from Guy Hall, Hatfield Park, c1983.

NO DISRESPECT INTENDED

Whilst browsing through old copies of *Hertfordshire Countryside* the following Limerick was seen:

There was an old lady of Hatfield,
Who hunted o'er hill, dale and flat field.
At four score she still
Rode to hounds with a will,
Losing none of her ardour in *that* field.

No prize is offered for identifying the first Marchioness of Salisbury who, it is said, rode to hounds on the very last day of her life, when a widow of eighty five. Her unfortunate death, in 1835, resulting from the fire when the west wing of Hatfield House was gutted, was reported by a young news hound named Charles Dickens.

Letters

Hay-on-Wye

I remember the funeral train of George VI going past at Hatfield. I was at school and had permission to leave before lunch. It went past relatively slowly. My Mother recalls quite a crowd of people on the bank of the pleasant walk that went up to Traveller's Lane bridge. Is it still there? Best regards to anyone and everyone who might remember us.

Janet Robinson

Roe Green
Hatfield

The March Newsletter referred to No. 3 Fore Street as 'Goodrich House'. It should read 'Morton House'. Goodrich House is No. 12 on the opposite side of the road and houses the Parish Church Office on the ground floor.

Jean West

Endymion Road
Hatfield

Referring to the letter regarding Robert Brian Randall, he was buried at Colney Heath on 25th September 1939 and the grave number is 162.

M.E. Burgess

Hatfield

There is no truth in the story that the turnpike road from Hatfield to Reading was made to order to enable Lord Salisbury to travel to Bath to cure his gout.

The 6th Earl of Salisbury, who was Earl at the time that the road was turnpiked in 1757, lived more or less as a recluse with his mistress at Quickswood, near Baldock, and seldom left it. He only visited Hatfield occasionally and neither he nor any other Earl of Salisbury was in the habit of going to Bath. There is no record that he suffered from gout.

As a young man he shocked society by his way of amusing himself: for he made friends with coachmen and used to drive the public stage-coach from London. Apparently he overturned it on several occasions, so no doubt he would have supported highway improvements, even if he had nothing to do with this particular road!

R.H. Harcourt Williams
HC May 1982

The Chequers Inn had its own brewery and as other breweries attached to inns in 18th Century Hatfield closed down, the Searancke brewery prospered and grew. In 1756 it is shown to be the biggest inn in the parish and it was probably about this time that it began to use its own particular type of beer mug, bearing the chequerboard emblem like the token halfpenny of a Century earlier. One of these Chequers mugs is also held in the museum.

By the early 1800s, the Searancke's owned 12 pubs in Hatfield Parish and others in the surrounding area. About 1815, Francis Carter Searancke sold most of his Hatfield property including the brewery and Chequers Inn to Joseph Bigg of Stanstead Abbott. In the next 20 to 30 years, the brewery changed hands several times, until in the late 1830s it was bought by John Morris and Alfred Pryor of Baldock. Later a relative, Percy Reid, entered the firm and the brewery became known as Pryor Reid & Co. Ltd. In the second half of the 19th Century and the first 10 years of the 20th century, the brewery (now spreading out from its Medieval centre at 1-5 Park Street) covered a large area at the back of Park Street, where Salisbury Square now stands. The Hatfield Brewery, as it was known, flourished and became the town's chief employer, and the most important brewery in the county.

A picture of the Hatfield Brewery as it was in 1907, published in the *St. James Review*, shows what a large and important concern it was. In March 1920, the brewery was closed down and its 98 public houses were sold to Benskins Watford Brewery and Waters' Garage took over the brewery site.

Photographs showing some of the old pubs owned by the Hatfield Brewery displaying the Pryor Reid sign are available.

The type of bottles, jars, claypipes and drinking vessels which you would have seen and used in an inn like the Chequers Inn if you had been born in the 17th or 18th Century (1600-1800) can also be seen in the museum.
