

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

Editorial.....

Following on from Local History Day in May, as reported in our last Newsletter, your committee has been continuously active over the past three months.

On the 10th June members visited Much Hadham as described by Jim Parker.

A display was organised for the Local Clubs and Societies evening at Birchwood Leisure Centre on the 12th June as part of the Hatfest celebrations. These culminated in Carnival day on the 15th when again the Society presented a display which attracted considerable interest and useful contacts were made.

We were extremely grateful to the museum staff for making available the facilities at Mill Green on August 5th for our open evening. A display of photographs and publications was presented in the cottage together with a view of the facilities in the Resources Room, including local history photographs, library database and oral history recordings. A tape player is now available for people wishing to listen to the recordings. The mill was operating although not milling flour. The museum displays were available and Carol Rigby and Caroline Rawle - manager and curator - were on hand to escort groups around the new building which houses the museum store of some 9000 items, all listed and available for research and exhibition.

Gordon Mills had kindly agreed to guide members around the Mill Green Trail and refreshments were prepared and served by committee members.

SUMMER OUTING

by Jim Parker

On a Monday afternoon in June 12 members of the Society set out on a journey to Much Hadham in uncertain weather, more like April than the height of summer.

Our first port of call was the Forge Museum where we were met by the Curator who told us something of the history of the building and then gave us the opportunity to look around the forge, the items on display and also the cottage garden at the rear. The forge was owned and run by four generations of the Page family from 1811 until some twenty years ago. Although the forge is still in operation it is leased to a local blacksmith but the ownership of the buildings is now in the hands of The Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust, having been donated by Miss Jean Page.

We were very fortunate to be able to visit the living quarters at the front of the building, part of which dates back to the fifteenth century. Whilst inside the Curator gave us the opportunity to view some unique sixteenth century wall paintings which were discovered in recent times. These paintings, covering three walls of one of the ground floor rooms, were the subject of conservation work over an eight year period from 1988 to 1996 and further research is still being carried out. It has been established that the painting along one wall depicts the judgement of Solomon and another wall bears the crest

of the Newce family, prominent local citizens at that time.

The Curator then took us on a tour of the village giving us detailed information and anecdotes relating to many of the attractive buildings which line the main street. These include many fine timbered buildings, the Hall with its most elegant Georgian façade, the Red House dating from 1725 and the Old Red Lion which has been traced back to 1450. Then on to St Andrews Church, now shared by both Anglican and Roman Catholic congregations. Fortunately it remains one of the dwindling number of churches which is open throughout the day so we were able to go inside to view the treasures both ancient and modern, ranging from its architectural features and brasses to the impressive millennium tapestry. Among the items of special interest is the stained glass window by Henry Moore, one of Much Hadham's famous twentieth century residents. On entering the church one is immediately struck by the array of 400 brightly coloured hassocks, made by residents and depicting local points of interest.

We were very fortunate in that it remained dry throughout our tour and we drove home a little weary but having thoroughly enjoyed learning a great deal more about this small East Herts village than we had ever expected.

I am sure that all who went would wish to extend a hearty vote of thanks to our Secretary, Chris Martindale, for making this visit possible.

FLORENCE TYLER

From a transcription of a taped interview with her grand daughter, Miss Marie Hipgrave, recorded on the 14th March 1987 (Florence's 101 year) by Mr.R.J.Busby, ex-Librarian at Hatfield Public Library.

Florence Farmer was born in 1886 in a little one up and one down cottage in Gun Yard, owned by Mr. Canham, Landlord of the Gun Inn.

With three sisters and two brothers, the family were glad to move into a house in the third right of way which had two bedrooms.

Her father worked on the railway in the pump house where they pumped water into the engines. She tells how "he kept a couple of pigs to try to make a little money. Mr. Lawrence at the mill at Mill Green used to send in the pig meal and we had to walk down there to pay for it. When the fields were being harvested we went glean-ing and were allowed to pick up all the odd bits. When we'd got a bag full we took it to the mill and he used to grind it out for flour. They closed the mill when the old chap died. He had two sons but they didn't take it over".

Her mother used to go pea picking in Hatfield Park along the London Road. She was paid so much a bag but it took all day to get a bag full.

Florence went to day school along the London Road and to Sunday school in Park Street Chapel.

She saw Queen Victoria going in to visit the Salisburys at Hatfield House. The school children used to line up outside the park gates and waved to her as she went by with Lady Gwendolin Cecil who had a house in the park.

She remembered getting a little job taking care of a baby, taking it for an airing every day. The school inspector put a stop to this because she was not old enough to leave school. The baby belonged to a draper named Andrews, but he had to leave his shop because he couldn't make it pay.

Her eldest brother emigrated to Canada and joined the Canadian army during the war. Her younger brother worked for Mr. Hulks the baker taking

bread round with a horse and cart to places like Lemsford and other out-skirts where people couldn't get to the shop.

There weren't many shops in New-town so people had to go to Old Hatfield for Butler the butcher in Fore Street and Cox the chemists, down a few steps. There was also a man who made horse collars and Walby was in Park Street.

Florence remembered her first job in the Green Man in Fore Street, where she had to look after the children and take the baby out in a pram. In front of the front door was a trap to open to get down to the cellar. If anyone wanted to get into the house they had to wait until the trap was put down so they could walk over it. She says "I didn't stay there long as the people at the Indian Chief offered me a better job, so I went there. I got two shillings a week, but I slept there and had my food. My room was at the top of the house.

"Old Brandy Whitby was the land-lady. She was a good old lady and looked after me. I stayed there until she moved and her son took over, then I got sick with anaemia and had to see old Dr. Holmes. There was only one other doctor, Drage, for the better class people. Poor people had to see Dr. Holmes. Later on Dr. Cardinal came to live at Triangle House near the railway bridge. Dr. Brittain came next. We had to pay pennies for the doctor and a shilling for a bottle of medicine. If we wanted a hospital it was by train to Hertford then a bus to the hospital."

After the East Indian Chief, Florence worked at Potters Bar until they started taking in boarders. Her sister wrote a letter to her employer saying that the work was too hard for her and a girl should not have to serve two mistresses. "So they chucked me out!"

She then went to Southgate and stayed for quite a long while but the family increased to six and only her to do all the hard work, washing up and scrubbing, although the oldest

daughter used to help make the beds and things like that. She then went to Cambridge for a little while but that was too far away.

"So I came back to Hatfield to some people called Lockhart. He was a nice man - a wood merchant. They had two boys when I lived there but after I left Mrs. Lockhart wrote and told me she had five boys".

During the war Florence worked at the vicarage for Mr. Lovell until they moved and the person who took over had a maid.

Her father then asked her to give up service to come home and look after the children because they were being neglected. Her mother was not happy about this, she did not want her there. "After the war I got married at St. Etheldreda's. I was the only one of the girls who had a carriage to take us to church. My husband worked at Astwick Farm. His father was a ploughman. He was a general labourer and looked after the horses. The pay was dreadful. He left there and worked with his brother on the railway as a platelayer before he got a job at the gas works".

Florence went to work for Mrs. Mc-Sweeney when they lived over the shop. She used to go and make up the fire at night. After Mrs. McSweeney she worked for Mr. Whitby the school master.

Florence had two children a boy and a girl and she died in her 101st year.

Transcribed and edited by Frank Cox

1965 News Item

Hertfordshire County Council has abolished the free weekly issue of tobacco and sweets to old people which was established by Victorian Poor Law. A survey of county welfare homes shows that the old people are not too badly off. They are now paid 13/6d a week pocket money as compared with 5/- in 1948. The free weekly issue comprised one ounce of tobacco or a quarter of a pound of sweets.

TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES OF HATFIELD - 2

FLOUR MILLING

THE IRON DUKE

By Frank Cox

150 years ago, this month, the Duke of Wellington died at Walmer Castle in Kent, on 14th September. Among his friends, it is recorded, was Frances Mary Gascoyne, the first wife of the second Marquess of Salisbury. She noted in her diary that at one moment during the fire at Hatfield House, in which her mother-in-law, the dowager first Marchioness died, she became convinced that the whole house would be destroyed so went to her room to collect all the items the Duke had given her. When she died in 1839 the Duke was one of her mourners.

Following her death, the Marquess married Lady Mary Sackville West, who continued the friendship with the Duke. During the last years of his life the Duke wrote to her almost daily. When he died in 1852 his son, the second Duke, presented Lady Mary with his father's charger (which was descended from Copenhagen, the Duke's horse at the Battle of Waterloo). The charger was later buried near the Old Palace in February 1861. A memorial tablet let into the wall commemorates this event. The Duke of Wellington had been appointed Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, whose official residence is Walmer Castle, in 1829. For the month long visit of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort to Walmer in 1842, the Duke moved out to stay at the Ship Hotel at Dover while the Lord Warden's apartment was demolished to create private rooms with furniture specially brought in. One of the items of furniture which still survives is the four poster bed

The miller is very important in village life as he grinds the corn which the farmers grow into flour for bread. In 1086, the Domesday Book, the survey which William the Conqueror had made of England, showed that four water mills already existed at Hatfield. The entry in the Domesday Book which relates to Hatfield is written in Latin.

Three mills still stand on the sites where 900 years ago, the flour mills mentioned in the Domesday Book stood. These are:

- 1) The Lemsford Mill which became an engineering firm.
- 2) The Cecil Sawmill, in the park at the end of the Broadwater.
- 3) The Mill Green Mill, in which the Society now lives.

This last mill is the only one which still contains a water wheel and the mill machinery, although this ceased to work commercially in 1911 and stood idle for some years until its restoration in 1986. Milling now takes place regularly.

The fourth mill, used to stand in Bush Hall Lane, where Turnpike Cottage now stands. Between 1086 and the 1600s little is heard of the four mills which were quietly receiving the farmers corn, and grinding it into flour for Hatfield's people. At the Norman Conquest, Hatfield was a small village. By the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, it was a bigger and richer farming community and the mills would have increased in size and wealth also.

We know that in the 17th Century the Bush Hall Mill had turned to making cloth and paper, but the other three continued to grind corn. We will take the history of our own mill as most is known about it.

The first named miller is the troublesome Luke Rawson, who was here for about forty years at the beginning of the 17th Century. Edward Arris took the lease of all the mills in the area and little more is heard until 1726, when Joseph Bigg took over the mill. You can see on the side of the mill a dated brick which says "I B.1762" and marks the date on which Joseph Bigg (I I B) rebuilt the mill. In 1767, Joseph the Elder died leaving £1,600 to his three grandchildren. In 1824 the last Joseph Bigg of the line gave up milling, having (it is rumoured) gambled away £20,000 of the family property.

The amount of money left by the family shows the wealth of the miller and the status he must have had in the community. In the 1870s the Biggs family left the mill and the Farrs, an old milling family, took the lease. They were Hatfield's millers until 1884, when George Farr died.

The Mill went out of use in 1911 when Mr. Lawrence the miller retired and his sons did not wish to carry on with the business.

Hatfield Industries

Based upon articles written by Susan Harrison for the Hatfield and District Archaeological Society, undated

PLEASE NOTE

Change of Meeting

14 October 2.30pm

"You Tell Me"

**Memories of St. Albans
With oral history tapes and
slides
by
David Broom**

The last Charger of Arthur Duke of Wellington (descended from his Waterloo Charger Copenhagen) was presented by the second Duke to Mary Marchioness of Salisbury, Nov.18,1852; and

A simulation of the tablet on the Old Palace wall

GRATITUDE

by Mary Padgett

Thanks to the Local History Society, especially to Frank Cox, for making my lifelong ambition come true via the book "Dreams come true". Thanks to all who bought a copy thereby boosting the Society's funds. I have started now on my life story. If my doctor's prediction that I will live to be 100 comes true, I may get it finished, so Frank had better be around!

A lot of changes in Hatfield should get a mention therein. I had never seen an aeroplane until I came from Durham to Hatfield in 1937 - only the sound of one up in Durham's sky.

de Havilland's has gone. So too has 'Cat's Eye' John Cunningham whom we almost worshipped for his exploits against the Nazi bombers. 'Cat' was to represent carrots to which was attributed his wonderful eyesight in the dark. "Not so" he has said "No carrots, just excellent team mates". His death was reported in July.

A huge university is now located in the fields where sheep once safely grazed. Its car park has replaced the allotments, once as good as Kew Gardens. My own peaceful garden now suffers from theft and students' coke tins.

The 'tin chapel' in Roe Green has gone. A bungalow replaced it. The town centre is to undergo massive changes - when? If it happens while I am still writing my story it will be described, especially if by then I can still ride my electric scooter to see the blessings of good shops. Hope springs eternal.

WANTED!

Your stories or articles for inclusion in future Newsletters.

Only by including your submissions will we be able to maintain the four page editions which have become a feature of recent letters.

Comments for the Letters column will also be welcome.

IN THE BEGINNING

By 'Doc' Watson

When I entered a newspaper office as a cub reporter the first thing that dawned on me was that expectations of a newspaper filled from front to back with news of happenings since the last publication was a lot harder to achieve than one might think. Some weeks were full of exciting stuff so that the Chief Rep, moaned "Just give me the bare bones", whilst another seemed to be Sunday every day and he threw back the "Three sticks" story of Mrs. Brown falling over the broom handle and breaking her leg, with the order "You can do better than that son, tart it up, put some meat on it, give me half a column." All this leads me to the stories I offer you. All the basics are true I do assure you. Some are true all the way through as my white hair will testify, but others which merit only a column inch have been tarted up with conversation and so on. If therefore, you can raise a laugh from each page, I shall feel rewarded. My thanks to the kind folk who cast an eye over the pages as we went along. Leaving out some of the pungent remarks from brother old timers at (a) being maligned and (b) being left out. Ah well, you can't win 'em all. Also my thanks to W.P.C Sue Smith who called to see me when I was typing notes for a talk to some old folk, read over my shoulder as I worked and said "You cannot stop at three or four pages, this will be lost for ever, you must keep going to the bitter end." Also thanks to another Sue, Ms Kirby ex-Curator of the Mill Green Museum, Hatfield who was kind enough, or rash enough, to sharpen her blue pencil and insert the missing dots and commas. There are, you see, some advantages in being an ancient when one requires assistance from young ladies.

Other articles by 'Doc' will appear in future issues.

Letters

Welwyn Garden City

I am researching the history of Ludwick Hall which was once part of the Salisbury Estate. So far I have collected what I could find on the ownership, use and structure of the property from books and records held in WGC and Hatfield Libraries and Mill Green Museum. I am hoping that the Salisbury Family will be able to provide me with information during the period that they owned the Hall.

Any additional information that members of your Society could provide or point me to would be much appreciated.

David Kell

Welwyn Garden City

Welwyn Garden City Society is organising Heritage Open Days. Buildings not normally open to the public will open their doors and guided walks will take place around the town on 14-15 September. A stall will be manned in the Howard Centre where a guide and map will be available listing all the events taking place.

Lucy Gravatt

MEETINGS

9 September 7.30pm

Recent Work of the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust
Talk by Lee Prosser

14 October 2.30pm

Memories of St Albans
With oral history tapes and slides
By David Broom

11 November 7.30pm

Slides of Old Hatfield and Film of Building Bridge in French Horn Lane
By Philip Porter

9 December 2.30pm

Open Meeting
Bring your articles for discussion

All at the Swim Centre