

# Hatfield Local History Society

No. 47

# NEWSLETTER

December 2002

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

## Editorial.....

As the year 2002 draws to a close we can look back at another successful year for our society. Although it was regretted that subscriptions had to be increased to meet running costs our membership was maintained at around the 100 mark, only nine people failed to renew their membership and this included some regretted deaths.

The attendance at meetings confirms your interest in the subjects discussed and in the venue. However it is becoming more difficult to find speakers on suitable subjects. Your suggestions could help Chris to arrange a programme which could then be published for perhaps a full year. Other matters on which your help and suggestions would be welcomed are support for the Hatfest presentation, articles for the Newsletter, volunteers to help with photographs, articles etc. on Hatfield's lost buildings and the proposed new Heritage day.

Your committee members are mostly fully committed to specific projects and would appreciate any assistance however small. Don't be shy, display your talents and see how much fun it can be. Another successful Lone Star day was held at the Museum on 29th September with Reg Coleman heading the project and other members assisting. Your help would be appreciated next time.

## THE VINEYARD

In May 1611 the new Hatfield House, built by Robert Cecil the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Salisbury, was ready for occupation. The gardens had been planned and planted and had a flight of steps from the terrace, a bowling green and a maze within the proximity of the house. Away from the house and leading to the river Lea was "The Dell" consisting of topiary yew trees, lawns and gardens. On the far side of the river some 20,000 vines, procured for the earl by the wife of the French Ambassador, were planted. Consequently "The Dell" became known as "The Vineyard" although with time the vines became worn out and were not replaced. The gardens were also stocked with cherry trees, nectarines and liquorice. The kitchen garden supplied fruit and vegetables to the House.

In February 1892 William Hemmings moved into the Vineyard as gardener, with his wife Alice and their four children. At the start of WWII, at the age of 76, Alice was persuaded to write her memories of life at the Vineyard, the laughter, the tears and the recollection of two world wars.

We are grateful to her great niece for allowing us to produce and publish this tender story of days gone by.

Watch this space for details of our new publication next year.

## Letters .....

*Alvaston,  
Derby*

*I am trying to trace any recording relating to Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Smee Gunn of Pond Hill, Hatfield. They had a son Joseph Alfred Gunn, a second class dining saloon steward on board RMS Titanic, lost 14<sup>th</sup> April 1912, whose address was recorded as Batterdale, Hatfield. There were also two daughters. Any information would be appreciated.*

*Lynne Curtis (Mrs.)*

*Hatfield  
Herts*

*Can anyone help me establish when the Barnet By Pass was dualled between the Stone House and Birchwood Roundabout?*

*Eric Sherrard*

Following our September letters a number of members visited Ludwick Hall on Heritage Open Day and were able to assist David Kell with his researches. Thanks to all respondents.

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**WANTED**  
Copies of  
HATFIELD AND ITS PEOPLE  
We have had requests for spare copies of these original WEA booklets. Should you possess unwanted copies we will be pleased to put you in touch with people wishing to obtain them

# The Wicked Earl

by Robin Harcourt Williams

In April 1742 Mary Grave, a young woman from Baldock, went to work as Housekeeper to the Sixth Earl of Salisbury (1713-1780) at Quickswood, his smaller Hertfordshire manor-house about 20 miles north of Hatfield. The Housekeeper there was usually paid a wage of £20 a year, plus board wages, but Mary Grave received vastly more: on one occasion alone the Earl gave her a bank draft for £8,000.

Soon after going to Quickswood, Mary - in her own words - "rose into higher confidence" with the Earl. Many of his letters to her, whom he addresses as his "Dear Love", have survived at Hatfield. Writing on 22 January 1745 (by which time they had had two children) he excuses himself for being unable to see her that day because of "some particular business which detains me at home" but continues, "I beg you would not be under any uneasiness upon that account". At the foot of the letter Mary has added: "he was married the 24 that was the business unknown to me".

The inconstant Earl, who had illegitimate children by at least three other women, soon had two daughters by his new Countess and then, in 1748, a son and heir who was later to become the Seventh Earl. In the same year Mary Grave went back to Quickswood and in a short time she was pregnant again.

Within a few years the Countess had separated completely from the Earl and took her young family with her to London. Hatfield House decayed, while the Earl spent more and more time at Quickswood, eventually living as a total recluse there. His way of life is described in a letter, dated 1771, which was written by Chase Price MP (by coincidence, the grandfather of the Second Marchioness of Salisbury)

after a journey through Hertfordshire:

"In the call I had upon the Road at Lord Salisbury's ... I saw a most singular family; Dimsdale is his Physician and his Lordship sees no other human being, unless a short, thick, square fat Woman well pimple'd in her countenance, and well stricken in years can with propriety be call'd so! and yet alas this is one of the fair sex, and Lord Salisbury hath us'd her as such half a century ago, for I was introduc'd to three as fine and fair young people two women and a man, as ever I beheld; all of them the produce of the joint endeavours of my good old Lord and the above mention'd Lady. They inhabit an old tapestry Parlour with a prodigious wide chimney piece as perfect and entire as the moment it was built which probably was about the time of the reformation Lord Salisbury acknowledges but never sees them, and treats them in that respect as if they were his legitimate children, he lives up stairs in a larger but much the same furnish'd room as his Parlour only he is surrounded with old Trunks and Boxes and scatter'd Books, well or ill he never quits this Chamber never sees or converses with any but his old Dame as he calls her, and his Physician who occasionally visits him. The servants are old and rusty like the dwelling."

Mary remained at Quickswood until the Earl died in 1780, leaving enormous bequests to herself and their children, amounting to more than £50,000. The Seventh Earl of Salisbury contested the validity of the will, which resulted in a Chancery case. I have recently been consulting the records of it at the PRO: they include a fascinating - but certainly incomplete - list of furniture, china and family silver

which Mary removed from Hatfield to a house in Baldock, now inaccurately called The Manor House. Mary prudently persuaded the Earl to buy it for her in 1769, to make sure that she would have a home after his death.

The Chancery records entirely confirm the impression of the Earl's reclusive life given in Chase Price's letter. They show that the clergyman whom the Earl and Mary employed as tutor to their sons lived with them at Quickswood from 1771 onwards: the Earl saw him about the house every day, and sometimes two or three times a day, yet never exchanged a word with him for seven years! The Earl (known to later generations of the family as the Wicked Earl) cannot have felt much need for the ministrations of religion, for he had already appointed the tutor his chaplain and made him Rector of the parish! The tutor was also one of the executors of the Earl's will, which was accepted as valid by Chancery.

One of the first acts of the Seventh Earl was to raze the Elizabethan mansion at Quickswood to the ground.



**QUICKSWOOD CLOCK**

*This clock, photographed in 1968, on a barn at Quickswood, near Baldock, dates from the reign of James I. Quickswood manor was demolished by the seventh Earl of Salisbury about 1780, following the death of the "Wicked" sixth earl, but the clock survived.*

## TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES OF HATFIELD - 3

### PAPER MAKING

The site of the paper mill (i.e. a water driven mill making paper) lies upstream from Mill Green, down Bush Hall Lane, and is now called Turbine Cottage. The cottage on the site is modern but attached to it is the small brick building which housed the wooden wheel of the paper mill and it is still possible to see this and the mill stream. The wooden housing for the machines which made the paper is seen from a picture on an early 20th Century hand painted calendar to be very rickety and this was demolished and Turbine Cottage built.

The mill by Bush Hall turned to making paper in 1672 when the cloth industry which had used the same building failed. Early paper was made by a very simple method; old rags were collected, soaked in water to soften them and then beaten to a pulp using large hammers which were driven by the power of the river turning a water wheel. The broken up rag fibres were then pressed to produce sheets of paper which were then dried out. The entire process took about two weeks. After 1802, a machine had been made which produced the paper in a continuous roll and helped to speed up the process of making paper.

The Hatfield Paper Mill was owned by Lord Salisbury who leased it out to various people, during the 17th and 18th Centuries. It was burned down in the 1780s but rebuilt by Thomas Vallance who had the bad luck to find in 1790, that he was threatened with a strike. Eleven men who worked at the Mill were prosecuted for "Conspiring to compel the said Thomas Vallance to enhance their wages by one shil-

ling weekly, and for threatening that, if he failed to do so, they would quit his service at the expiration of 14 days"

In 1800, the lease of the mill was sold to a man called Thomas Creswick who made a great success of papermaking and introduced into the mill a steam engine and new machinery which helped him to produce cards and drawing boards as well as paper.

The paper mill, as well as providing jobs in Hatfield for 200 years, also had a romantic and a funny side to it's history. In the 1830s young Mark Powell, a paper maker, came from Kent to work in Mr. Creswick's mill as a supervisor. Just downstream from him, in the flour mill lived Mary Bigg, the sister of the Corn Miller. Mark met Mary and in 1832, he married her. They then left the mills and went to Forestreet, Old Hatfield, where they opened a stationers and then a drapers shop.

In the middle 1830s the Reverend F.J. Faithfull, who lived at the old Rectory, now Howe Dell School, had asked Lord Salisbury to stop the papermaking because of the morals of the girls who worked there. The good gentleman was outraged because the girls strolled through the Country lanes "arm in arm, singing". Perhaps the rector's complaints had some effect on Lord Salisbury, for when the lease came up for renewal, Lord Salisbury refused to let Mr. Creswick stay. They argued about the ownership of the paper mill's machinery, Mr. Creswick left in 1838, and that was the last time that paper was made in Hatfield.

## A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

In his book "Some Memories of Bishop's Hatfield" the Rev. Jocelyn Antrobus refers to Sir Francis Boteler as a smaller country gentleman. He was knighted in May 1642 for supporting the king against the Commonwealth in the civil war.

The son of Ralph Boteler of Tewin, Francis succeeded to the manor of Hatfield Woodhall.

According to Chauncy "He was well skilled in the discipline of military affairs and reputed an excellent soldier; he treated his neighbours with great courtesy, assisted his friends with much willingness and relieved the poor with great cheerfulness."

In 1678 he made over Leggs Farm in Ludwick Hyde for the benefit of five poor widows. The rent and profit from this Boteler Charity is still, today, shared out to four widows in Hatfield and one in Tewin. The trustees of the charity nominate the recipients who are now presented with a cheque valued at about £50 at Christmas time by the Clerk to the charity Mr. Richard Robinson.

The 325 years old documents relating to this benefaction are held for safe keeping at County Records at Hertford.

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## FIRST FLIGHT RECALLED

A memorial stone marking the place where Sir Geoffrey de Havilland made his first flight in 1910 was unveiled in Seven Barrows Field, Beacon Hill, Surrey near the border with Hampshire, by Lord Porchester in 1966.

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Hatfield Industries

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

## Heritage Open Days

We have been invited to take part in a series of open days within the Welwyn Hatfield district. This follows a most successful weekend when the Welwyn Garden City Society held their Festival of Buildings in September, when more than 20 houses, buildings etc. were open to the public together with five guided walks.

Your committee has expressed a keen interest in organising a similar event - albeit not so ambitious - in Hatfield.

Chris Martindale, Joan Cobern and Brian Lawrence are prepared to form a sub-committee to lead this project but need at least two more people to complete the group. Please get in touch if you feel you can help. Suggestions of places to visit and walks to be arranged would also be helpful.

Please get in touch as soon as possible as details are required by next April.

### THE WORKHOUSE

Fact versus Fiction  
By Caroline Hill



OLIVER ASKS FOR MORE

An in depth comparison of the workhouse as portrayed in literature and as experienced in the Union Workhouse at Hatfield. New publication.

Price £3 plus 50p postage

*Christmas Greetings*



*To all our Members*

*The Old Palace, Hatfield*

## Meetings 2003

No Meeting in January

Monday 10th February 2.30pm

Dr. Jim Lewis

### INDUSTRIAL HISTORY OF THE LEA VALLEY

Dr. Lewis has written 2 books on the Lea Valley

Monday 10th March 7.30pm

Mrs. Clare Fleck

### KNEBWORTH HOUSE

Mrs. Fleck is the archivist at Knebworth

Monday 14th April 2.30pm

Dr. Gillian Gear

### INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS 1857 - 1933

Dr. Gear gave us an interesting talk last year on Restoring a Tudor Farmhouse.

Monday 12th May 7.30pm

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Followed by

Dr. Eric Sherrard

Second talk on

### MODERN HISTORY OF HATFIELD

All Meetings at the Hatfield Swim Centre

Visitors Welcome