

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

England's Finest Attractions Open Their Doors - Free of Charge!

HATFIELD will be opening the doors to show off some of its hidden architectural treasures to residents and visitors **FREE OF CHARGE** between 12 - 15 September 2003. Organised by members of our Society the activities and openings form part of **Heritage Open Days 2003**, a national event co-ordinated by the Civic Trust and part of a European wide initiative, European Heritage Days.

Heritage Open Days activities will take place all over England (apart from London) from 12 - 15 September 2003. It is estimated that around 800,000 visitors will enjoy the weekend, making the most of the opportunity to explore a selection of private homes, castles, follies churches contemporary design classics and architectural eccentricities.

This is the first time that Hatfield has taken part in this project and our thanks are extended to Christine Martindale, Joan Cobern, Brian Lawrence and Reg Coleman for arranging and organising the opening of houses and buildings and to our two walk organising guides Eric Sherrard and Gordon Mills.

Most of the attractions are not usually open to the public so this is a valuable opportunity to visit and learn about some of the treasures on our doorstep.

Programme details are listed in the next column and full details are available from Hatfield Library, Mill Green Museum and other outlets.

Further details can be obtained from Christine.

Whilst all the necessary work relating to this exciting weekend has been carried out by our small group listed above, to make it the success we hope for it is hoped that other members could find a little time to assist by distributing leaflets, displaying posters and possibly by helping to manage a small display stall at a convenient location to be agreed, for a short period. Please phone Chris. if you are willing to help.

Our sincerest appreciation and thanks go to all the people who have agreed to open their doors and to prepare exhibitions and talks.

Thanks also to the Town Council and the District Council for generously sponsoring the weekend.

Cockaigne Housing Group and Community Housing

69 the Ryde, Hatfield
28 Grade II listed single story houses, community house and tennis court. Designed in 1962 by Randall & Rakes following Alexander & Chermayshef's book.
Saturday 1200-1700

Great Nast Hyde House

Wilkins Green Lane, Hatfield
Tours of this Jacobean Manor House and grounds. Recently restored by new owners after decades in corporate ownership
Sunday 12.30 and 1600

Hatfield House Tennis Court

Hatfield House Tennis Club, Fore Street Lodge, Hatfield Park
Brief talk on history of Real tennis followed by demonstration of play and display of equipment etc. **Maximum 40 people per session.**
Sunday 1100 and 1430

Hatfield Swim Centre

Lemsford Road, Hatfield
Designed with concrete hyperbolic paraboloid shell roof, one of the largest in Europe at the time. There will be a small exhibition.
Friday & Monday 0700 -1800 Saturday & Sunday 0800-1800

Howe Dell School

Old Rectory Drive, Hatfield
Housed in a Tudor rectory. Refreshments will be available in the dining room or the Yew lawn if the weather is fine.
Saturday 10.30-1600

Mill Green Museum and Mill

Mill Green, Hatfield
Working water mill. Exhibition 'At Home With The Romans'
Saturday and Sunday 1400-1700 Display of 'Lone Star' toys and models produced by local factory **Sunday only.**

St. John's Church

Hilltop off Bishops Rise, Hatfield
Grade II listed building. Modern architecture, 43 years old. Modern stained glass windows, gallery and two organs - Makin.
Friday, Monday 1000-1430 Sunday 0930-1430

St. Luke's Church

St. Albans Road East, Hatfield
1877 chapel in Newtown was built as a cemetery church by 3rd Marquess of Salisbury. In 1893 converted into a full church. History display.
Saturday 1000-1600 Sunday 0930-1430

GUIDED WALKS

From Bypass to Motorway. .

Maximum 15 people. Pre-book on 01707 265062
Sunday 1030 Booking Required.

Mill Green Hamlet. Meet outside the museum.
Sunday 1430

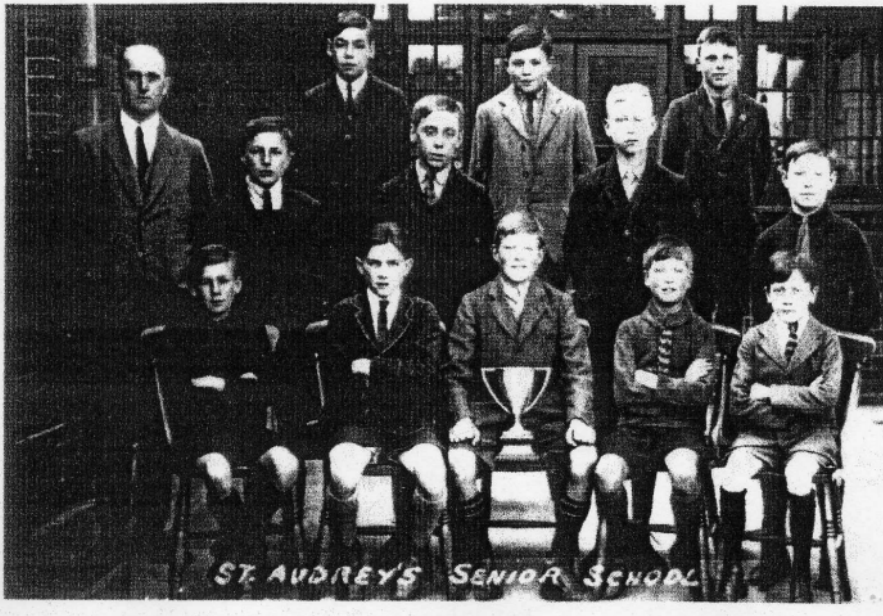
HATFIELD AND ITS PEOPLE: FARMING YESTERDAY AND TODAY

by G. M. Brown

(Reviewed In *The Amateur
Historian* in 1963)

Lowes-Dickinson once made Lord Salisbury, whom he disguised as Lord Cantilope, say 'I believe in inequality. The people in whom I take pleasure are the products of the countryside, fellows who grow like vegetables and put on sense as they put on flesh.'

This admirable monograph by the Hatfield W.E.A. is about the farms of Lord Salisbury's Hatfield. It discloses no new reason for accepting inequality, but it does show that few people can have had the opportunity of growing like vegetables. Between 1824 and 1900 only three families remained on the same farms for the whole period. In the early part of the century the incumbent believed that no person of good character was out of work for long. But then, picking up manure on the roads was one of the ways in which the poor had to live. Mrs. Brown and her helpers have traced the growth of the farms of Hatfield, in some instances from the thirteenth century. Few of them were the products of parliamentary enclosure. Much strip cultivation survived into the nineteenth century, and the areas in which this happened are located in terms of present day landmarks. Several inns were really farms of between twenty-three and one hundred and sixty-nine acres. The proximity of London meant a great deal. Straw was in demand for London stables, so the crops were cut tight to the ground. And in 1850 it was optimistically believed that Smithfield cattle market could be removed to Hatfield. All the essentials have been packed into forty-eight pages, and the author has shown her self a worthy successor of the great Arthur Young who, as we learn, farmed land in what is now Hatfield New Town.



County Garden Cup Winners 1926

This photograph was sent in by Pauline Hannigan and shows local schoolboys with their headmaster, B.H. Oliver, proudly displaying the trophy. Those so far identified include Ernest "Titch" Moore, Ernest Gower, "Chin" Rumney, Sidney Bishop and Ron Sutterby.

John Gray explains that "in the 1920s St. Audrey's Senior Mixed School had extensive gardens around its east and south sides. The less academically gifted boys spent some of their school hours tending the gardens - vocational training!

"One assumes this was a common feature of education throughout the County and a cup was presented to the school with the best kept gardens.

"There should, perhaps, be more of this kind of education today as some children will never be GCE competent."

HALS Garden Party

A small group of members joined with HALS to enjoy the Annual Garden Party at Tewin on 29th June. Meeting at the church we heard a short talk on the history of the church which was decorated for the Flower Festival and saw the memorial to Ralph Boteler father of Sir Francis whose 1678 charity still supports widows in Hatfield and Tewin. In the churchyard we viewed the renowned tomb of Lady Ann Grimston and the graves of the de Havilland family. An interesting exhibition by the Friends of Tewin was staged at the Memorial Hall before visiting the listed Modern Movement House, built in 1936, for an introduction by Linda Adams. Following a sumptuous tea in glorious sunshine we were invited to tour the garden and visit the interior of the house.

Methodism in Hatfield

BIRCHWOOD Methodist Church in Heathcote Avenue, Hatfield, celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1988 and, to mark the auspicious occasion, a booklet was published giving the history of the church and remembering some notable events and personalities.

Probably the earliest link with Methodism in Hatfield dates from 1736 when Charles Wesley, on a visit to his sister Nancy who lived in Fore Street, read prayers in Hatfield Parish Church. In 1851 the Moo Cow chapel was opened in a room in the Two Brewers public house in Church Street to be followed in the 1880s by the Wesleyan Chapel in French Horn Lane and, finally, Birchwood Church in 1938.

HERTFORDSHIRE PUDDINGSTONE

IN FOLKLORE AND RELIGION

Legends and myths regarding its origins and strange powers abound in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. It is thought that the name "puddingstone" dates from Saxon times and that the other names such as "breeding stone" and "mother stone" are of much earlier pagan origin.

The belief was widespread among superstitious villagers that the "breeding stone" or "mother stone" was always growing and collecting to itself pebbles or "fruit" or "children". There appears to have been a vague belief that the stones were actually alive, could move and had human feelings!

"Growing stone" was a common superstition among farmers who believed that the stones would grow in their fields and damage their crops and ploughshares. In reality hard frosts, soil erosion and ploughing of surrounding soil often progressively exposed the stone on the surface.

When there was bad weather, with torrential rain and flooding pudding-stones would be exposed by soil erosion. Later puddingstone would become associated with misfortunes such as floods so it was called the "woe stone".

Pieces of the stone known as "hagstone" or "witch stone", were often placed on the doorstep of a house or carried in the pocket to ward off evil. A parish record of 1662 states "...that a hagstone be placed on the coffin, for her bodie within be bewitched." This was to

prevent a suspected witch from escaping.

In A.D.601 Pope Gregory issued a letter to missionaries which decreed that pagan idols and myths should be sanctified by incorporating them into the teaching and fabric of the church. Consequently large blocks of puddingstone were often used as a foundation stone for church towers, buttresses and porches.

Puddingstone was first used as an alternative to flint to manufacture stone implements during the Stone Age. The Romans transported large numbers of puddingstone querns, rotary corn-grinding tools around the country and other puddingstone querns have been dated up to the medieval period. It has also been used as a whetstone for sharpening swords and knives.

The hardness of puddingstone makes it of value to the lapidarist as it takes a high polish to reveal the variety of colours in the embedded pebbles. Whatever the truth about the powers and unusual properties of puddingstone, without doubt it is one of the natural features for which Hertfordshire is justly famous.

DEATH OF LORD SALISBURY

Robert Gascoyne Cecil, the sixth Marquess of Salisbury died at Hatfield House on July 11 aged 86. He was buried in the family plot in the grounds of Hatfield House following a service in St. Etheldreda's Church at which the Grenadier Guards provided music supported by a choir and orchestra. The lessons were read by Viscount Cranborne and one of Lord Salisbury's grandsons. A 21 gun salute was also sounded.

THE PARK WALK

It was a gloriously sunny day when we met Robin Harcourt Williams on the steps of Hatfield House preparatory to our guided walk in the park. A brief discourse on brickmaking on the estate dating back to the days of the old palace - a skilled business made redundant when the railway started importing cheaper bricks into the area - was followed by a few steps through the exit to view the route of the old north road down Fore Street and the old Salisbury Arms Hotel. Across to Church Street to see some more of the bricklayers' skills in random and rat trap styles before re-entering the park and traversing the road southwards past some of the historic buildings such as Lawn House, the Old Dairy and Bunnyfields. Walking the old turnpike road highlighted the travel problems of the old coaching days. Crossing the pond in which the landlord of the Greyhound Inn at Woodside was drowned - thus contaminating the water supply to Hatfield House - we arrived at the new sawmill, a modern business venture specialising in sawn oaks for reclamation projects and suitably named Hatfield Oak, from where was supplied the pergola at Mill Green Museum Jubilee Garden.

A steady walk across the fields permitted some unusual and interesting views of the house with intermittent sightings of the fallow deer recently imported into the grounds. Skirting the lake we glimpsed the maze and the gardens before passing through the kitchen gardens with its abundant crops.

A rather weary but very grateful group expressed sincerest thanks to Robin for arranging and guiding the walk interspersed with his knowledgeable comments which highlighted the two hour excursion.

HATFIELD AND ITS PEOPLE - UPDATE

Peter Massingham tells us that the WEA have contacted a number of people who were involved with the original publication of the booklets. The University of Hertfordshire has expressed an interest in the project to update the information in a new book consisting of 12 chapters, following the original titles.

As the period under review is a follow on from the 1961 edition it is felt that many local people could help with their memories of facts and happenings. To assist in the preparations of the new chapters copies of the original booklets have been reprinted and can be obtained from Frank Cox on 01707 321812.

It is hoped to convene a meeting of interested people, preparatory to the formation of a WEA team, in the near future. Phone Peter on 01707 882177 or Frank to be included.

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Many members will be aware that I suffered a heart attack back in June and spent several weeks in hospital. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking members for their "get well" cards and messages of support which have been very much appreciated during my weeks of inactivity.

I am pleased to say my re-habilitation programme is going well and I hope that by the end of September I shall be able to pick up the threads on some of my regular activities again, including attendance at the Society's meetings.

My thanks and kind regards to you all

Brian Lawrence

Letters

Leominster

I lived, with my parents, at Morton House, Fore Street, Hatfield in the 1950s, a house that was restored. and then occupied by Frederick William Speaight (1869-1942) and his family. Although there is a long entry for Mr Speaight in Who Was Who, his building and property restoration work in Hertfordshire and Kent are not mentioned, and there is little about him and his work in "Hatfield and it's People", published by a group of which I was a member (and the joint—author of Book 3 Pubs and Publicans). Nor is Mr. Speaight's architect, A. Winter Rose, mentioned.

Is there, please, a member of the Society who has made a study of Mr Speaight and his Hatfield properties? His younger son told me that he owned and restored Morton House, Goodrich House, Travellers Rest, Bakers Arms and Church Cottage, and built The Close.

Any assistance you are able to give me would be appreciated.

Malcolm Pinhorn

We were pleased, with the help of our friends, to be able to identify Old Farm, Hatfield on an old map as located on the western edge of what is now the Welwyn Garden City Golf Course. It was part of the Panshanger Estate farmed by the Horn family in 1832 with, later, the Handside and Brickwall farms. It is a reasonable conclusion to assume that some time between 1847 and the first decade of the 20th century, the Old Farm changed its name to Brickwall Farm.

Autumn Programme

8 September 7.30pm

Last Flight of Lancaster LL919

Anne Grimshaw

13 October 2.30pm

Commonswood Nature Reserve

Jenny Ruby

10 November 7.30pm

The Home Guard

Col. J D Sainsbury OBE TD FSA

8 December 2.30pm

Open Meeting

All at Hatfield Swim Centre