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HATFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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CHANTRY HOUSE

Recently, a 21 year old student from Lincolnshire died after contracting tuberculosis (TB) in this country. For many, TB is a lung disease that seemed confined to a bygone era, but whilst deaths are extremely rare nowadays, it was a major health issue a century ago. Earliest known records show that in 1913, there were 36,500 deaths from TB just in England and Wales, with casualties reaching a peak in 1918. It was a disease that Lady Gwendolin Cecil set about curing. She was the daughter of Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, and built Chantry House - a sanatorium for sufferers, in Hatfield in 1906.



Chantry House Sanatorium c1910

The WEA book *The Story Of Roe Green* informs that she was a pioneer who believed that TB could be cured by open-air treatment, and she had moveable chalets built so that patients could avoid cold winds whilst outside. And, in an attempt to create an alpine fresh air environment, she had conifers planted on about half an acre within the grounds. They can still be seen today at the junction of Bishops Rise and Woods Avenue although Chantry House was demolished during the 1970s. It was accessed by Chantry Lane which, for hundreds of years, once wended its way from the two Roe Green Farms to Angerland Common in South Hatfield. (Effectively this would now be between College Lane and the far southern end of Bishops Rise). The word 'Chantry' is an ancient term associated with the Roman Catholic Church. Generally, *Chantries* were lands donated to the church. A chapel and priest were often provided and funded through the proceeds generated from usage of the endowed land. For this, donors would have masses held to benefit their soul, typically on the anniversary of their death, and in perpetuity. Invariably they were all wealthy people! In Hatfield's case the original donors appear to be the Louth family who, by 1333, had

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Chairman: **Mrs Chris Martindale**



endowed their Chantry with 33 acres in Hatfield and North Mymms. But Henry VIII's reformation abolished the Louth family's Chantry in 1545 and the priest was 'turned adrift'. The land seems to have come under the ownership of the Cecil family, as evidenced by Lady Gwendolin's construction of the sanatorium in 1906 when she employed trained nurse, 52 year old Miss Eliza Dann from Nottingham, as her live-in matron. The 1911 census reveals that she was then assisted by a Clara Bristlebank (nurse), Alice Smith (servant) and Annie Ellen (cook). All were single women.

The 1911 Census provides details of Chantry House patients at the time:

Walter Albert Cannon	single	38	stonemason	from	Stoke Newington
William Bell	married	35	electrician		Ayrshire
William F. Thatcher	single	21	clerk		N. Kensington
Alfred G. Stretton	married	24	motor car conductor		Hastings
Herbert Cooper Dixon	single	17	ironmonger		Peterborough
Isaac M King	single	44	organ builder		Midlothian Waddenturn
Albert J Sharpe	single	22	bootmaker		Hinckley



*Some Chantry House patients in one of the movable chalets
Photo provided by Brian Tott*

The sanatorium catered for a maximum 15 patients who came, as seen, from all over the country. But whilst some 'ran away' due to the strict routine imposed there, a few others stayed and found employment locally and, presumably, after having been cured of TB! However, the sanatorium closed in 1915 and its patients were transferred into the care of the County Council. Chantry House then became a private home, with Kelly's Directory providing the next occupant as a Mrs A. Crouch, in 1923. From 1936 a Mr Frank R Reider was registered there until 1949 when a Mrs A. Whincap took up residence. By 1958, a Mary Whincap had married Antonio Pinna (an Italian prisoner of war) and they had made Chantry House their family home, along with young sons David and Jeremy. Notably, various registrations misspell Mary's husband's name as 'Anthony Pinner'. During the late 1950s, South Hatfield was becoming heavily populated and Mary Pinna utilized her home and its extensive gardens as a nursery / holiday camp for local children. She was also a vegetarian and did not provide meals containing meat to her charges.

The author recalls attending Mrs Pinna's holiday camps, and remembers the large aga oven in the kitchen and its clay tiled floor. Cheese dishes were a predominant feature of her menu. Cakes too. Children could play on the large raised lawn or in the pine woodland that was planted by Lady Gwendolin Cecil half a century before.

THE TUDORS: 1960s HATFIELD POP GROUP

In 1961, 15 year old pupils David Dickenson and Roger Bevens played *English Country Garden* in a music class. This event was the beginning of pop group The Tudors! Roger had just bought a Hofner dark red solid guitar, (quite rare in those days) and an 8 watt amplifier. They were joined by aspiring drummer John Hostler whom they met at the St. Johns Youth Club – then based at the Cavendish Hall, and soon after that Keith Stone (bass) joined. Vocals were mainly Roger and John, some from Keith and the odd one or two from David. Roger - the WGC Interloper - often used to cycle some 4 miles to the club with a guitar over his shoulder and the amp resting on the handlebars. “Give us a tune Elvis” was often catcalled to him en route.

Club leader Bill Surtees agreed to let The Tudors practice in a side room upon condition that they return on Club Nights to play on stage for the members. In those days the Cavendish Hall was also used on Sundays by the St John's Church, prior to the completion of their new Church building at Hilltop in South Hatfield.

The Tudors also played at the opening of the new church, outside, after the ceremony.

They were a cover band initially, their set being heavily influenced by The Shadows and interspersed with occasional Buddy Holly songs. The Beatles also became a major influence on the band; both John and Keith would order their latest records in advance. But whilst the group's style began to change over time, they retained the famous Fender sound. The band developed some really good 3 part harmonies including self-penned compositions. They practiced mostly at Keith Stone's house (he had very understanding - or deaf – parents) and at Dellfield Primary School Hall, roughly 150 yards from the house of ex Rolling Stones guitarist Mick Taylor. Most weeks the boys would have a beer in the 8 Bells pub in Fore Sreet after rehearsals. Chart topping band *The Zombies* were often there too. The Tudors' John Hostler sang in the same St. Ethelreda's church choir with Zombies drummer Hugh Grundy and their vocalist, Colin Bluntstone; both of whom were also members of the parish youth club that John attended.

The Tudors as a band were neither Mods nor Rockers, but probably a mix of both, thus managing to stay clear of trouble - although musicians, thankfully, were normally left alone by the yobs. Their Manager once employed some of the worst local “mafia” as bouncers at a Cavendish gig. It was a clever move, and they were as good as gold the whole night!

In 1964 Roger Bevens' first car, bought from his dad, became a sort of mascot for The Tudors. It was a 1951 Ford V8 Pilot (Al Capone lookalike) and easily recognisable!

The highpoint for the Tudors was undoubtedly achieving 3rd place in the Radio 1 and Melody Maker National Beat Contest in the summer of '65', arguably making the Tudors the most successful combo in Hatfield at that time. During that period, the Tudors became a 7 piece combo, with 3 sisters, called *The Carolines*, who mainly sang Tamla Motown soul material. John once played drums in a session for Polydor records to back *The Carolines* when they cut a record of their own after leaving The Tudors. The record got into the top 50, but John received no payment for his endeavours.

The Tudors did a session at Phillips Records where some deranged individual suggested changing the group name to *Mellow Yellow* and dying their hair the same colour! David left shortly after, and a guitarist called Mick joined the band.

John left shortly after, and emigrated to South Africa, to reside in Durban for 31 years. He turned pro and played drums in a resident hotel band in the Umhlanga Rocks Hotel, where he met Cliff Richard, and obtained Bruce Welch's address to send him some self-penned songs. But he received no reply, alas. John's interests today are folk music and some country and traditional jazz - which he played in Durban. He is currently forming a 60's folk/rock band in East Wittering with some very good musicians living in West Sussex.

Roger, John and Keith (the bass guitarist, who emigrated to Canada) wrote many good songs, but like many other bands, didn't get the breaks.

Roger later played in The Hitchin Strangers, a sort of showband, in the 70's - coincidentally there were 3 girls in that band too, plus organ and 2 electric accordions which created a great sound. In 2008 Roger joined, and still plays in, a Shadows tribute band in Cambridgeshire as 'Hank Marvin' and loves it - although his fingers don't move across the guitar as fast as they once did. Roger (in John's opinion) is arguably one of the finest Hank clones around. In 1998 Roger bought a clavinova digital piano and recorded all his songs as instrumentals and wrote more. Three of Roger's instrumentals were published on a library CD in 2000 and he joined the Performing Rights Society. One track was played on Radio Cambridgeshire (Caribbean Skies) for a holiday advert, earning Roger the princely royalties of £17.50 before tax! Roger and John re-united after 40 years in 2010. David Dickenson took up his passion of photography after leaving The Tudors, and he made some valuable contributions to the recent Hatfield pop music book "*Rock Around The Block*".



THE TUDORS c1963



August 2012. Ex DH flight test engineer, Ron Price, stands by the Control Tower atop the hangar he once knew as the Comet Flight Shed. - now the David Lloyd fitness club. Just under the roof, the glass panelling used to have a frieze of the horizon which noted tall landmarks such as the Shenley water tower, Brookmans Park transmitter and St. Albans Cathedral. Under each icon was noted the distance from the control tower. This information could quickly be relayed to aircraft.