

Hatfield This Century

Hatfield People Explore their history from 1900

No. 8

Newsletter

December 1992

Editor: F. Cox

Since our last newsletter a number of activities have been undertaken by members of the Group.

On 5th September the exhibition of Hatfield and the de Havilland Aircraft Company - entitled "An Engine of Change" - opened at Mill Green Museum. The exhibition is not only about aeroplanes but also about people who worked there and their leisure activities related to the Company. Over 150 photographs are on show and the identification of people in them has been an interesting project which is still going on.

On the 30th October a members' evening was held at the museum and attracted a large number of members with reminiscences of DH's, Hawker Siddeley's and British Aerospace. This event emphasised that this is a living exhibition with with personal anecdotes and experiences to extend the knowledge and history of this aspect of Hatfield.

Thanks are extended to Sue and members of the Group who gave of their time in the preparation of the evening not forgetting the the preparation and dispensing of refreshments.

The exhibition is open at normal museum opening times until 28th February 1993 and on most Sundays members are in attendance to share experiences and accept comments and information.

The Charity Air Day at British Aerospace on 20th September attracted huge crowds on a glorious sunny day and much interest was shown in the Group's display of projects in hand.

Eric has recently given two talks in Hatfield. One to the Hatfield Arts Society on the Hatfield Tapestry and another as part of the 30th anniversary of the Hatfield Library. The second talk focussed on activities in 1962 and included a display of photographs etc. Again, identification of people depicted in the photographs is sought and to this end the photos are currently on display in the library.

It is proposed to hold another members' evening in late January or early February, hopefully with a talk illustrated with slides. This also would be an opportunity to meet and discuss the various projects and studies being undertaken. It is hoped to book the library room for this. Details will be circulated when available.

HatFest is to be held from the 12th to 19th June 1993 and the Town Council has asked the Group to provide a contribution. Present plans are for a "Pot Pourri of Hatfield" consisting of several small talks illustrated by slides. As in the past, both afternoon and evening talks will be given.

Brian Lawrence writes "I have been gathering information on aspects of life during the second world war. I have a considerable amount of material on major incidents such as the bombings, the evacuees, the military hospital at Hatfield House, the Wings for Victory and Battleship Week campaigns etc. There are two areas about which I have little information - Jack Oldings factory and the RAF camp. If any members have any knowledge about these I would be very pleased to hear from them. Any photographs of events or incidents in wartime Hatfield which I could borrow and copy I would be most grateful for.

Stan Huckle sends in an appeal "for information about the Hatfield College Youth who are the local bell-ringing society, also about the ringers, their bellringing records and the bells."

Eric Sherrard tells us that “Flypast aviation magazine for November has a picture of a Buccaneer S.1 aircraft number XK488 with its nose in a greenhouse near Hatfield full of begonia cuttings. The location and date of the accident are unknown but it is known to have occurred between November 1960 and April 1961 during trials on the 7100 lbs Gyron Junior engines. A search of the Hatfield Herald for this period has failed to produce any reference to this event. It could be that it occurred at Smallford and was reported in a St. Albans paper. This particular aircraft is now featured at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton. Any information would be gratefully received.

To assist with researches and to compile a data base it is hoped that members will search their photo albums, attics and other storage areas for any items that could be of assistance to our researchers. For information the following areas are being studied and members would be grateful for any supporting documentation.

Hatfield New Town
Gt. North Road south of Red Lion/Railway

Mill Green
Puttocks Oak (French Horn Lane/St. Albans Rd)
De Havillands and Hatfield

Questions that have been asked.....

Does anyone remember where Cole Green Station used to be on the Hatfield/Hertford branch railway?

Were there stops on the Hatfield/St. Albans line at Wellfield Road and Lemsford Road?

What is the story around the tank which was in Hatfield Park?

What is the history of the school bell displayed at St. Audrey's/Onslow School?

What is the connection of the Ryder Cup for International Golf with Hatfield?

The Hatfield Tapestry has been launched with assistance from both the Town and District Councils. Thirty four people attended the first meeting and a second meeting was organised to discuss the design implications and led to the formation of a small design group which has already had its first meeting. A short list of 12 panels has been chosen for the initial designs on the basis of offering a range of manufacturing techniques. Members of the public will be invited to submit designs - particularly on subjects covered by this short list. It is hoped to have these designs at full scale (25 inches x 21 inches) ready for Hatfest for public comment and to enable manufacturers to select a panel for their textile technique. Initially A4 size designs (ratioid down to 25 x 21) would be very welcome. Further details from Eric on 265062.

With the coming of the new year we are reminded that subscriptions for 1993 are due in January.

**Wishing you a Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year**