

Hatfield This Century

Hatfield people explore their history from 1900

No. 11

Newsletter

December 1993

Editor: F.C«x

Since our last Newsletter the Committee have held three meetings and a members' meeting was held, on the 27th October.

A smaller version of "Engine of Change", the de Havilland exhibition, was staged at the Hatfield library and attracted a lot of interest.

Further representations have been made to retain the de Havilland Museum at Hatfield, preferably on the existing site and David Evans M.P. has been working on our behalf. A letter from Charles Masefield of Avro International Aerospace has been quite encouraging. Meanwhile the Mosquito Museum is applying for re-location to the Hatfield site. The committee is very supportive of this idea.

At the August meeting Dennis Jenner volunteered to undertake the position of secretary.

MEMBERS' EVENING

On the 27 October about 50 members and friends met at the Birchwood Leisure Centre to watch a slide show of old Hatfield ably presented by Ron Kingdon. His photographs of areas of the town now demolished evoked considerable interest and comments. Nostalgia was very much in evidence as we reminisced over Salisbury Square, Jacobs Ladder, the old French Horn Lane and Hollier's dairy together with the Stone House the old flats and Jack Olding's. Thank you Ron for a pleasant evening and for possible illustrations for future publications. To complete the evening Eric Sherrard recounted the history of the New New Road, the Barnet By Pass, from farm track to motorway.

TREASURE TROVE

I recently had the pleasure of spending some time at the Museum where Sue kindly showed me the where-abouts of the transcribed oral interviews that have been collected, and the files of information on almost every aspect of Hatfield and its environs. Unfortunately with space at a premium it is not possible to make these generally available to the public, but Sue is quite happy to arrange for anyone to make use of these records for specific projects or just for browsing, with a little forward notice. Meanwhile if you have any photos, news clippings, programmes of events etc. which could be included in this collection send them along.

THE STONEHOUSE ... continued

Dennis Jenner tells us that because of the clock it was originally called The Clock House Hotel. However, following legal objections from the Clock Restaurant, Welwyn, the name was changed to the Stonehouse Hotel. It was subsequently sold to Benskins Brewery of Hertford and was finally demolished to make way for the Galleria.

THE IDEAL HOME?

With the listing of the original de Havilland office blocks details have been unearthed of another building of the same era, in Hatfield, which also carries a class 2 listing. This is a house which at the time of its erection represented the ultimate in living accommodation for people "who do not want to live in boxes divided into compartments arranged around a central hall." "These people find incongruity in the streamlined car at the door of the twentieth century Tudorbethan home. "

The article from the Architectural Review of September 1935 tells us that the house is not large. It has a living room 35 feet long, and at one end where the dining recess occurs, 25 feet wide. The main part of the living space rises to a height of 17 feet, so that with the staircase in the room, the first floor landing space, instead of being wasted as a passage, becomes an internal balcony at high level in the room, and is fitted with a day bed, writing table and a trough for plants and flowers. The window opposite the fireplace is 17 feet by 9 feet and altogether there are 400 square feet of glazing in the room! The walls and floors are of reinforced concrete four or six inches thick. An even temperature is maintained by hot-water with the radiator areas calculated scientifically. The principal and only bedroom on the first floor has its own bathroom and a roof garden. The wall between the main bedroom and the roof terrace is entirely of glass in three tall panes from floor to ceiling and slides and folds to one side so that the room may be opened entirely to the outer air. Window frames are steel. The inside walls are distempered in pale colours. The exterior is painted pink with paint which adheres to concrete. "This is the outcome of a plan made for modern living."

Further details of this house are available from the museum library

Subsequent to the preparation of this item application to demolish the house has been rejected and the owner is considering court action.

DAD'S ARMY

Brian Lawrence is researching Hatfield Home Guard and would like to contact ex-members. Information or photos will be gratefully received.

ORGANISATIONS

Information on clubs, societies etc. is being sought. One suggestion has been for the Railwaymens Club. How about the Scouts, Guides, W.I., Co-op Guild etc. Potted histories could be included in future news-letters.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

We are reminded that subscriptions are due on the 1st of January. Please make your cheque out to Hatfield This Century and send to the Treasurer,

With Best Wishes
for Christmas and the
New Year