

HATFIELD THIS CENTURY
Hatfield people explore their history from 1900

EDITOR: F.J.Cox,

NEWSLETTER

Congratulations to Brian Lawrence. "Hatfield at War" is now on sale at the Mill Green Museum, Hatfield Library and other outlets. 100 pages of nostalgic reminiscences accompanied by evocative photographs will hold pride of place on many local bookshelves and promote much discussion and memories. A real snip at £4.95 plus 50p post and packing. Please make your cheques payable to Welwyn Hatfield District Council.

To coincide with the 50th anniversary of the end of the war your committee has arranged for a talk on the Home Guard in Hertfordshire by Lt.Col.J.D. Sainsbury T.D. F.S.A. at the Oxlease Centre, Travellers Lane on Monday 25th September at 7.45 p.m. Admission will be £1 but fully paid members will be welcomed free. Your support is sought for this presentation as similar future events will be dependent upon the success and attendance on this occasion.

Other events under consideration by your committee include a talk by Terry Pankhurst on his genealogical research into his Hatfield family history and with the demolition of the old Police Station, memories of the headquarters and the police force in Hatfield by "Doc" Watson. Ralph Hentall, the carver of lovespoons has also been approached.

A suggestion of coach trips to places of interest is submitted for your consideration. Let us have your comments and suggestions.

The master tapes of oral interviews are held at the Museum. Some 85 interviews have been recorded. These are now being re-recorded and edited with the object of making them available on loan to members. Further copies may be deposited at the public library for general use. To assist with the cost of audio tapes your committee has made application to the Education Department of the Enfield & St. Albans Co-op for an award under the South Midlands Co-op Community Awards Scheme for voluntary groups involved in local community development activities.

Situation Vacant. Do you have a little time to spare and the interest to help in our researches? Most of our projects are undertaken by individuals who carry out their own secretarial tasks but the odd jobs of booking halls, contacting possible speakers and keeping records of general activities need co-ordinating to maintain a tidy association. Our meetings are efficiently recorded by Pat Sherrard as minute secretary - thank you Pat! - so that reduces our requirement. Can you help? Please phone as above or Brian Lawrence on.

A suggestion to prepare a Hatfield Heritage Trail, probably composed of a series of short walks highlighting the changes in the town, has been enthusiastically approved by your committee, but it requires a project leader, Any offers?

The Puttocks Oak project has unfortunately been overtaken by other commitments recently but it is hoped to revive this shortly and members who have sent letters etc. will be contacted individually.

PARK STREET CHAPEL

Some of our older members remember Park Street Chapel. Sited between Hall's Yard and Chapman's Yard, through a pair of wrought iron gates down a drive past the manse, caretakers cottage and hall through another set of gates was the chapel set within its graveyard.

An early Victorian building with four pillars in the portico and pews inside for about two hundred people, the circumstances leading to its erection and the formation of the church are unknown. Inscriptions on stone, marble and bronze offer some details of its early days. Over the portico was a stone inscribed 'Park Street Chapel AD 1823'. Inside was a marble tablet erected to the memory of the first minister and his wife, the Rev. Charles and Mrs. Maslen stating that the church was formed on July 2nd 1826, called the Union Church and was composed of individuals of different denominations. A further bronze tablet discovered in 1933 is inscribed 'This Chapel was built by Voluntary Contributions for the use of a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters. The ground on which it stands and the adjoining burying ground were purchased and appropriated to these purposes by the Rev. Charles Maslen, of Hertford, Dissenting Minister of the Independent Denomination. This Foundation Stone was laid and the Inscription deposited by him, on Easter Monday, March 31st, Anno Dom. 1823'. Charles Maslen died in 1829 and left the Chapel to his wife, who in turn, bequeathed it to her two brothers Robert and Benjamin Young. The latter, before his death, purchased the freehold of the Chapel and burial ground and left it in the hands of Trustees for the use of the Church and Congregation.

Seven ministers are listed between 1829 and 1845 when the Rev. Samuel Raban took office for nine years until he resigned through age and ill health. He was succeeded by the Rev. Samuel Bird who resigned in 1858 when the Rev. T. Crow took charge until 1862. Various other students and probationers ran the church until the Rev. W.A. Buzza arrived in May 1906. After serving in the first World War he resumed work in Hatfield in December 1918 until 1921. Mr. T.W.Lacey became pastor in 1925 and remained in charge through the period of planning the new church and the closure of the chapel.

It had become clear in 1926 that a new church would be needed on the rapidly developing area west of the railway. By 1929 it was agreed to go ahead with the new project. The old chapel was sold for demolition in July 1933 and had completely disappeared by the end of September

Provisional arrangements for the talk by Terry Pankhurst, mentioned earlier, have been made for Wednesday 22nd November at St. Michael's Hall, Eirchwood. Confirmation will be included in a local mailing nearer the date.