

HATFIELD THIS CENTURY

Hatfield People Explore Their History Since 1900

No. 26

NEWSLETTER

Sept. 1997

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

Election of Officers

Subsequent to the AGM and in accordance with the constitution of the association, your committee met on the 19th June to - amongst other things - elect officers for the coming year. We are fortunate in that Brian Lawrence and Isobel Cox have agreed to continue as chairman and treasurer, respectively. Isobel also acts as membership secretary. Pat Sherrard, who has acted as minute secretary since the inception of the group agreed to continue and was formally co-opted on to the committee. Stan Clayton was nominated for vice-chairman and was duly elected. To clarify an outstanding anomaly, Sue Kirby, curator of the museum, who has always been so supportive in the background, was also co-opted on to the committee.

New Secretary

Although the position of secretary to the group had been vacant since April 1995 no nominations were received for this post, but by the August meeting we had a volunteer responding to our pleas! Mrs. Chris Martindale was duly elected to fill the vacancy and has taken over the position. Chris's involvement with local history is borne out by her

position at Hatfield Library and her involvement in the Hatfield 98 festival of which she has written elsewhere in this Newsletter.

HADAS

For those of you who were unable to attend the AGM and enjoy the reminiscences of the Hatfield and District Archaeological Society, Wendy Parry has kindly made available to us the display sheets used in her talk. Extracts from these will be published in future Newsletters.

County Records

A number of members were pleased to visit County Hall for a conducted tour and explanation of the County records. A further visit could be arranged should there be sufficient interest from members. A small group of up to about six could be accommodated.

Contact myself or Chris to set the ball rolling.

Comet Hotel

Concern has been expressed about the proposed renaming of the Comet Hotel. Your committee has decided to approach the directors of the Jarvis Hotel Group to reconsider this retrograde step.

Letters

The suggestion that Duck Lane could have been a corruption of "Viaduct Lane" was perhaps put forward with tongue in cheek. But, for the record, Duck Lane was in use as the older name for Park Street at least as early as 1613. In that year Ralph Stones paid a quit rent of 4d. to Lord Salisbury, the Lord of the Manor, for two cottages in Duck Lane (Hatfield House Archives CR 27/9). To this day the road is regularly flooded (near the entrance into Park Meadow) when we have a sudden thunderstorm, which may have something to do with the origin of the name.

Robin Harcourt Williams

There were maltings in Duck Lane in the 18th century. About 1700 (i.e. nearly 200 years before the viaduct was built in 1873) a malting was built by John Harrow in a 'little lane in Hatfield called Duck Lane' (WEA Book 11). Before the second New Town was built flooding took place from Howe Dell Swallow Hole to Reed Pond and Batterdale was sometimes flooded, the excess water ran down Park Street and into a ditch called Blackditch, I believe.

Gladys Brown

BOOMTIME Hatfield 1950's & 1960's

By Chris Martindale

Next year Hatfield will be holding the Hatfield 98 festival to celebrate a double anniversary. 150 years ago the original New Town of Hatfield was built and 50 years ago the post war second New Town began. Different sections of the community, including Hatfield Library, were asked to make a contribution to the success of this celebration.

After some discussions between Angela Esserin, Local History Librarian at Welwyn Garden City, Sue Kirby, curator at Mill Green Museum, and myself it was suggested that an oral history group could be formed, meetings to be held at Hatfield Library from September 1997 onward. Material collected from the group would form the basis of an exhibition to be held during the festival period in 1998.

As there is already quite a lot of material published about pre-war Hatfield the period chosen for the oral history session would be the 1950s and 1960s when post war expansion greatly increased the size and population of the town, thus the name BOOM TIME Hatfield 1950s &

1960s.

It is hoped to collect memories of incomers, who came from all walks of life and all areas of the country, to find out what it was like to move to a planned New Town with new houses, new jobs, new schools, new neighbours etc., in what was then a comparatively rural area.

We would also like memories of people already living in Hatfield to find out what they felt about these changes.

The first group session begins at Hatfield Library on Monday September 22nd 1997 from 2.30 to 4.30pm. and then on every following Monday initially until Christmas.

Anybody who feels they have a contribution to make, however small, is welcome to come along on any Monday from this date onwards.

To help jog memories it is hoped to use photographs, slides, newspaper articles, books and memorabilia of the period.

The group will be led by two lecturers from the University of

Hertfordshire, Anne Burke and Mary Corbett. Historical input and background help will come from Sue Kirby and Richard Busby, one time librarian at Hatfield. Any other help will come from library staff.

Lastly it should be mentioned that financial input for setting up these sessions and for the exhibition next year will come from the HATFIELD 98 committee set up by the Hatfield Town Council.

It is hoped that BOOM TIME Hatfield 1950's & 1960's will be a success and that the material gathered will complement and increase the historical knowledge of Hatfield so that it will be of interest not only for today but for the future as well.

*An Exhibition
by Ron Kingdon*

*The Motor Bus in & Around
Potters Bar*

The Local History Museum

The Wylllyotts Centre

Potters Bar
(Next to the Station off Darkes
Lane)

July to December 1997

Tuesday & Wednesday 2.30 • 4.30
Saturday 2.00 - 4.00

*Come and see some more
of Ron's local
photographs*

Entrance Free

St. Michaels Church Hall
Birchwood Avenue

THE POOR LAWS AND WORKHOUSES

A Talk By
Dr. Kate Thompson - County Archivist
Wednesday 8 October 1997 7.45 pm