

Hatfield Local History Society

Formerly Hatfield This Century

No.34

NEWSLETTER

Sept. 1999

SECRETARY: Mrs. C. Martindale.
EDITOR: F.J.Cox, 23 Home Meadow.

Editorial. . . .

Apologies to Reg Coleman for leaving him off the list of committee members in the last Newsletter.

Subsequent to the elections the following appointments were approved by the committee for the current year: Chairman - Brian Lawrence ViceChairman - Stan Clayton Secretary - Christine Martindale Treasurer - Isobel Cox.

About 15 members turned up at St. Etheldreda's Church for the conducted tour arranged by Barry Smith on the 12th July. Thank you, Barry for providing an interesting and instructive outing.

Your committee has been busy preparing a programme for the coming months. On the 13th of September, at 2.30, a talk by Margaret Tyler will cover her experiences at Wellfield Hospital and her involvement with the Wellfield Trust.

Sid Holton and Gordon Mills will give a talk with slides about Mill Green on the 11th October at 2.30 pm.

A talk about the Hatfield Magistrates Court, based on the researches of Victor Mills JP MA (deceased founder member of the group) will be presented by Elizabeth Menzies JP MA,

editor of the book "Open and Local Justice" on the 8th November at 7.30.

An open meeting when members are invited to bring along interesting memorabilia will provide a forum for an update on project work being carried out. This will be on 13th December at 7.30.

All at the Bill Salmon Centre.

The Old Rectory

Occupied in Tudor times by Sir Fulk Onslow, after whom the local school was named, the Old Rectory was the home of successive Rectors until Lord Salisbury had the new premises built in Fore Street for Lord "Bill" who was Rector from 1888 until 1916. During that time the Rev. Francis Faithfull, Rector from 1818 started teaching local children there until he died in 1854. In 1948 the building was taken over by the County Council for Howe Dell Secondary School for 11 to 15 year old pupils, the headmaster, Mr. W.M.Duane carrying on a policy of self expression, until 1954. In 1955 the school changed to Junior Modern for ages 5 to 11 with Mr. G.MacKay as head. Recently Ofsted inspectors claimed lack of facilities so the school is to be re-sited as part of the B.Ae. development. We wonder what will be the future for this historic house?

Letters. . . .

Just a brief note to say how pleased I am that the Group has changed its name and is now ready for the next century, the next millenium even. I have recently taken up a new post at Pitshanger Manor and Gallery in Ealing looking after this splendid Regency villa built by Sir John Soane (famous as the architect of the Bank of England) and a large collection of salt-glazed stoneware pottery designed and made by four brothers in Southall and called Martinware. There are a couple of pieces in the collection at Mill Green but you will have to come to Ealing or Southall to see the best examples of their work. I am also working on a local history exhibition looking at the reasons people have moved into Ealing - over the last thousand years! I shall keep in touch as my family still live in the district. Of all my work at the Museum Service, the most rewarding was working on community history projects and I wish the Society every success in the future.

Sue Kirby

WANTED

Sites - shop windows etc. to display A4 posters of coming events. Can you help please? Phone nos. as above

BOOM TIME

A group of Hatfield people got together last year to record their experiences of living in the town during the 1950s and 1960s. The result was an exhibition which is on show at Mill Green Museum until November 28th. It includes photographs, objects, clothing and quotations from group members covering topics such as what was planned and what was actually built, home making, going to school, earning a living, shopping, relaxing and having fun.

Also on show at the museum is a video of milling as carried out on specific days of the week. This is of particular interest to those people unable to climb stairs to view the actual work.

As a temporary measure the mill and museum are not open during the lunch hour from 12.30 to 1.30

Philip Porter is anxious to find stories and old film of industries in Hatfield.

Whilst searching for speakers, your committee often come across the condition "overhead projector and screen required". This does rather restrict the number of speakers who can be approached to come along and entertain you. If anyone has any such equipment, or knows where it could be borrowed or hired, please phone Chris Martindale with details. Other requirements cover such things as slide projector with carousel and even flip chart easel.

I Lived There 1.

When in 1940, due to the threat of German invasion, the Government recommended evacuation of the south east, my parents and I moved to Hatfield. Employment was plentiful but accommodation was a problem until the tenancy of 23 Altham Court was obtained.

The most northerly of four blocks of 30 flats on the eastern side of the Barnet by Pass opposite the de Havilland factory, the courts, respectively named Haddon, Cumberland, Rodney and Altham had, at that time, long deteriorated from the exclusive luxury accommodation envisioned when first built.

No. 23 Altham Court was located in the north corner on the middle floor of three. Entrance was by double glass doors into a small hallway - just large enough to accommodate a perambulator or a couple of bicycles under the stairs. Linoleum covered concrete stairs led to the upper floors with the entrance doors on each land-

Through the front door led into a passage way extending both left and right. To the left one came to the main living room with open fire place, and a large kitchen dining room with gas cooker, sink etc. Leading out of this kitchen was a rear door on to a cast iron fire escape with just room to have a galvanised coal bunker. Along the passage in the other direction was a bathroom on the left. Although intended to have an oil fired hot water supply

from the roof, this had long been defunct and a gas geyser supplied hot bath water. Beyond the bathroom, at the end of the passage, were three bedrooms, a small one to the left, second one straight ahead and the main to the right. This was the only one supplied with any heating and this was by a built in electric radiant fire -non working! Lighting was by electricity. Although rather basic it was quite commodious.

Although suggested for listing all four blocks were demolished to permit construction of the Hatfield Tunnel.

Frank Cox.

Did you live in one of the houses before demolition? If so tell us what it was like, we could build a file on Hatfield houses past,

Editor

Another School Goes

Just one year short of its 50th anniversary, Gascoyne Cecil Junior School is closing to merge with Salisbury Infants School to become Birchwood Avenue Primary School. Mr. C.R. Woodward was the first head master in 1949.

A Display
of
Photographs etc of the
Box Factory
(compiled by
Brian Lawrence)
will be held at
St. Michael's Church Hall
Birchwood Avenue
25 - 26 September