

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

ASTWICK MANOR & NAST HYDE HOUSE

At the AGM a question was asked concerning the future of these two historic buildings which have been unoccupied since the closure of the British Aerospace site. I had previously made enquiries and had received reassuring responses from Arlington Securities who manage the site. I agreed to contact the company to get an update on the position. I have received a response from the Estate Surveyor and quote from his letter:

"In order to safeguard the physical and asset values of the properties, we have been working with the relevant sections of the Local Authority to agree appropriate maintenance works as and when required. In the case of Great Nast Hyde, we have also taken the precaution of installing a 24 (hour) security guard whereas Astwick Manor has the benefit of a locally based security patrol.

The premises continue to be held by our client for strategic purposes and it is fair to say that we would envisage being able to finalise future intentions for both buildings later this year."

I intend following up this letter at the end of the year if there is no further announcement concerning the properties and shall keep members advised.

Brian G, Lawrence

I LIVED THERE 5

I was born in Batterdale in April 1913 and we moved to Gracemead in September 1914. My father was employed by the railway so had priority for one of these Great Northern Railway Company houses. He had gas installed downstairs before we moved but upstairs lighting was by oil lamps and candles. The war had started and the army were taking over empty houses for the troops, so mother had to quickly get some curtains and put them up or we might have lost the house. As soon as we had moved in the Commanding Officer arrived to arrange for the billeting of three soldiers. Mother asked to be excused as she had two small children - my brother Robert was born in 1914 - but she had to have the troops in the sitting room. The house had three good sized bed

rooms, a kitchen, dining room and outside toilet. A coal cellar inside the house was act used for storing coal as father built one outside. We had a tin bath and had to light a fire under the copper to heat the water for baths in the kitchen. The houses were modernised in 1939 when electricity was laid on and my brother and a friend, by knocking down the inside coal store - in which mother had kept her mangle - turned this into a bathroom and toilet. This was a great treat as we had a basin and run-away fitted for the bath into the kitchen drain. We also had a gas copper to heat the water. The Development Corporation took over all of Gracemead about 1965 and demolished the houses to make way for the Woolco store. I had lived there for 53 years.

Dorothy Larkin

This will be the last in this series - unless you have a story to tell.

MEETINGS

31 members enjoyed the tour of North Mymms Manor house and grounds in June. Thanks have been sent to David Hincks and Glaxo Welcome for the hospitality which included copies of the history of the park and details of the Tudor wall paintings.

Our open meeting at the museum on July 10 was well attended in spite of the inclement weather.

Thanks to the staff for the displays etc. and congratulations to those hardy members who completed the Mill Green Trail - some with gum boots and umbrellas!

We now look forward to our autumn meetings at the Swim Centre. On 11th September 7.30 Mike Rogers will present a brief history of the de Havilland Aeronautical Technical School.

Continued overleaf

BARBAROUS TIMES IN HATFIELD *by David Cox*

Having spent all my life in Hatfield, I got round to thinking of all the various barbers that I have visited over the years. I can just remember getting a "short back and sides" at the famous Charlie Moore's in St. Albans Road. We would sit on the narrow bench under the front window, clutching our 4 old pence and waiting our turn. What a hive of activity that shop was! After that there was a period when we had our hair cut at home. My father would turn his hand to anything. He would mend all our shoes, sweep the chimney and so, if he decided he was an expert barber, we had to agree. We would not have dared to argue, father's word was law in those days.

A few years later I was travelling to the North West London Polytechnic every day so it was convenient for me to get a haircut in Old Hatfield. I would go up the steps into the shop at the bottom of Church Street (previously known as Back Street) now a gift shop but at one time known as The Cage. It was a barber shop at that time owned by Mr. Taylor. He was a bit sharp with us young lads and kept us in order, but we got a good haircut. It always seemed warm in the shop and he had a charming wife who swept up the hair, while under the barber's chair a lovely big dog would lie snoozing. After starting work at de Havilland's it was handy to pop across the road and get a haircut at Tasho's, which was next to Walton Hassell and Port the grocers mentioned by Reg Coleman in our June Newsletter. Tasho was a bit posh for us apprentices and it was rather daunting walking past all the cubicles with the ladies having their hair dos. Our hair was actually cut by Mr. Green, who worked in a

small room at the back of the shop. Mr. Green later got a small shop near where the old bus garage used to be and set up on his own. Many of his regular customers followed him there, including me. The place was so small that haircuts were by appointment only as there was no room to wait. Mr. Green thought it was time to pack up when his parade of shops was due for demolition. Then there was Nutley House, the newsagents in New Town. Mr. Butcher seemed to model Nutley House on the old Charlie Moore shop, as every available inch of space was used. Right in the centre between the piled up magazines and boxes of sweets there was a small clear patch where you could get a haircut. I tried them all including the Greek barber at Birchwood. Not forgetting Christopher next to the cinema where Peter Davies, now of Salisbury Square learnt his trade. Now sitting waiting my turn in the Continental or similar modern shop I think things have changed a bit since Charlie's time in the outhouse at the back of the White Lion. So too has the price!

MEETINGS

Continued from Page 1

Then on October 9th at 2.30 pm Michael Marlowe will help to celebrate 40 years of St. John's Church history with an illustrated talk. Eric Sherrard tells the story of Hatfield from 1900 until 1950 with slides on November 13th at 7.30 and another of our popular open evenings will welcome your memorabilia and updates of projects etc. at 2.30 on the 11th Dec. Look for our posters in the Library etc. If you could display one for public notice please let us know and one can be supplied.

Letters. . . .

Welwyn Garden City

Chris Liston's request for information on the Hatfield Workhouse has aroused many discussions, My grandmother, Emma Vyse kept the Prince of Wales which was opposite the workhouse. My mother was a young teenager in 1912-1920 period and she used to talk humorously of the 'Gentlemen of the Road' who used the Prince for bed and breakfast. Some who arrived were very poorly and filthy with lice. The staff at the workhouse were sympathetic and would bath and shave them, burn their clothes and delouse them. Then they would stay with my grandmother until they were strong enough to continue their journey. When it became a hospital I have memories of being in a dancing school - Doreen Ward's Dainty Tappers! - and every Christmas from 1940 until 1945 we would visit the home and dance for the old ladies. The residents seemed quite well to my young eyes and were dressed and sitting in chairs. Perhaps we were protected from the more infirm patients in the long term wards.

Peggy Steggs

Hatfield

I believe that two large books recording admissions to the workhouse may be in the County Archives at County Hall. They were found in the attic and were written in the most beautiful copper plate handwriting, showing the date of entrance of each person with brief details and the reason for admission. These were sent to County Hall and I hope that they have been kept.

Betty Hill