

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

Editorial.....

Our lead item in this edition was first published in the Hertfordshire Countryside in January 1983 and while some of our elder members may reminisce over the names and places mentioned, the scene is evocative of so many places and situations at that time that most people may well associate with the story.

Thanks again are extended to David Cox for his memories of Newtown during his wartime schooldays.

Your story of your memories, or of your family history, would make interesting reading and we would be pleased to receive them for inclusion in future Newsletters.

Ralph Hentall is researching the Hatfield Gas Works and hopes to publish the result of his investigations. If any member has memories, facts, anecdotes or other items which could be included we would be pleased to pass them on.

Thanks are also due to Eric Balley for undertaking the genealogical search for Mrs. Sims as reported overleaf.

Joan Coburn would be pleased to hear from anyone prepared to record their stories or memories.

Your committee has decided that as there will be no speaker at the December meeting - you are all going to bring along interesting items for discussion - there will be no admission charge to members.

The Scene in the Lane 100 years ago by Edgar F. Cull

In the year 1897 my parents moved from St Albans to Hatfield to occupy a cottage in Union Lane, (later to be renamed Wellfield Road) one of about 20 lining the lane on one side and facing the workhouse buildings and its grounds on the other.

Early in 1981 my brother Victor spent a few days with my wife and me and as we mulled over some of our family's 84 years in Hatfield, memories of boyhood days came flooding back and the following notes are of some of them around the turn of the century.

Along the lane came the muffin man with tray and bell and the man with winkles. Well known to us was Alf Reeves the coalman (I've put in half a 'undered, he used to say) and Bill Presland the milkman from Warren Lodge whose open back float close to the ground carried a brass bound churn.

Mr. Poynter, a fruiterer from St Albans is remembered for pomegranates, and a man with a trolley cart sold bars of salt to be cut and crushed.

The sturdiest outfit was the wagon of the Great Northern Railway, with bearded Mr. Miles at the reins.

Of several bakers with pony and trap was John Kentish of French Horn Lane, Billie Hulks from St Albans Road and Harry Hill of Fore Street who took bread to the workhouse. From Fore Street came Kingy with rabbits strung on a pole at sixpence each (old money). Mr. Dye, the sweep from Hertford, moved easily between cottage and castle. Perched a little higher than most was Mr. Isaacs from Roe Green waterworks for there was a mule between the shafts of his vehicle.

At a steady trot came the pony and trap from Astwick with Mr. Robinson at the reins and a churn of milk at his back. The dustcart of Jack Green made a slow move along as an ashpit had to be shoveled out, while a barrel organ

manhandled on two wheels, seemed heavy to haul away after its tinkling music. Against the fence of our cottage garden, bright with aubretia and feathery London Pride, rested the Dursley Pedersen bicycle of the rector, and the flimsy looking car of genial Dr. Brittain.

Moving with brisk steps was George Parrott, the lamplighter, who thrust his pole into the street lantern and watched the flame shoot out to set the mantle aglow. The pedestrian with locks flowing to shoulders was Garnet Smith, the writer and poet, from his sylvan retreat at Hawksyeotham — he passed regardless of our playing, as did bearded John Lloyd from Astwick Manor to bench or station, and a younger daughter followed with sprightly step to the Kennelwood croquet ground, while plodding cowman Jones turned into the cottage of his widowed mother.

Except for Sundays the lane was our playground, and in retrospect seemed always full of interest. There were the girls skipping or dancing around at oranges and lemons; the boys playing waggles, caddy, marbles, five stones, jump a little nagtail, acorn pop guns, conkers and whip tops.

The wooden truck contrived from a Tate cube sugar box (price fourpence, old money) from Tingey's the grocers brought coke from the gas works, sawdust from Streader's mill, and after a stormy night carried acorns to Mr. Hart at the Poplars. He and Mr. Humphrey of Goldings Dairy travelled sedately around in pony and chaise with their ladies. The steam roller crunched up and down as we safely trundled iron hoops, made by blacksmith David Dodds, around it. A slow moving traction engine towed a threshing machine, caravan and water carrier to a neighbouring farm and the neat outfit of hay and straw binder Valentine trotted briskly past. Twilight brought Johnny, the organ grinder, starting straight ahead as he trailed his ancient hurdy gurdy to the Church Army Rest beyond the workhouse. How soon these peaceful days were to change.

\*\*\*\*\*

## HATFIELD IN WAR TIME

By David Cox

I thought it would be a good idea to get down on paper some of the changes that were made to Hatfield during the war. Brian Lawrence has already covered much of the ground in his excellent book *Hatfield At War*, but perhaps we could make an imaginary walk through the town noticing things that would be different at that time.

We are in the play ground at St. Audreys school before it was bombed. The children are noisily putting tins and saucepans in to a compound. This has been hastily constructed from wood and steel netting and erected in front of the school building. The children have been told that the metal will be used to make Spitfires so they are keen to collect as much as possible. Leaving the school behind we look over the road to the Council Offices. They seem the same but without the new part on the side, and there is a brick blast wall in front of the doors. These walls were built in front of ground floor windows of houses. Many council houses in Dellfield had them. The only thing most of them did was to keep out the light.

Making our way along the St. Albans Road we see the large Static Water

Tank in front of the old Memorial Hall. This was to make sure that there was a supply of water available for the Fire Service. As we continue our imaginary walk a green London Transport bus goes by it's windows crossed with tape. A queue spills out from Butler's the butchers on to the pavement. On the opposite side of the road we can see the burnt out stubs, all that is left of the iron railings recently removed.

Before we get to the Odeon Cinema let's look in at the sweet shop to see if they have any chocolate in. No luck! Never mind it's always interesting to look at the pictures outside the cinema to see what will be on next week. Making our way towards the Fiddle Bridge we see the solid looking pillbox perched up on the embankment. A train is crossing the bridge engaged in getting it's load of coal to the Fiddle Bridge sidings. There is a colourful poster on the large hoarding under the bridge, as usual there is one saying 'Guinness is Good for you'.

The junction between the St. Albans Rd. and the Barnet Bypass is quite busy. There are great piles of stones on the grass verges. These are to be used to quickly fill any bomb crater that may be made in the road.

At the Comet junction (no roundabout yet) things do really look like a battle zone. There are rolls of barbed wire along the sides of the roads and triple rolls in front of the Comet Hotel. There are huge concrete pyramids on the pathways to stop tanks. It is just possible for us pedestrians to make our way through. There is another pillbox and more barbed wire. All along the Bypass we can see poles with wires stretched across designed to prevent enemy aircraft using the road as a landing strip.

Let us walk back past De Havillands. The factory seems to be very busy. There is smoke coming from the tall chimney. We can see the air raid siren

## HYDE FARM

Eric Balley

Members will recall the request that we received from Mrs Sims of Much Wenlock for the whereabouts of Hyde Farm in Hatfield Hyde, where her ancestors (the Barker Family) were living in 1881 at the time of the census.

We confirmed what she had found that Hyde Farm did not appear on any map of that district, nor did the tythe map help; but we found that by using the census return and a map of that period, it was possible to follow the route that the Enumerator had taken from 20th Mile Cottages, via Woodhall Lodge Farm and The Flint Cottage in Woodhall Lane, down Hollybush Lane to the cottage opposite the Church and then back up Homestead Lane past School House and other properties, until he arrived at The Woodman PH and the cottages to the west of it called Ranters Row.

In that way it was easy to see which house had been called Hyde Farm (to distinguish it from West Hyde Farm and East Hyde Farm) - names which had obviously survived from much earlier times when farms were smaller. By 1881 all that land had been amalgamated and was part of Woodhall Lodge Farm.

Today, of course, very few of the properties mentioned in the census return have survived the post war expansion of Welwyn Garden City over that area.

It is nice to be able to report that Mrs Sims was delighted with our reply, telling us that Mr Barker who had been a carpenter in 1881, had later become a builder, and that the family had moved to Barnet where late Victorian house building was taking place.