

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

Editorial.....

Firstly we should congratulate and thank Joan, Chris and the other members who arranged and organised the successful heritage open days. Our appreciation of the co-operation of members of the public and organisations in helping by opening their doors has already been recorded.

We were pleased to welcome Brian back to the fold after his illness, but regret his decision, understandably, to relinquish the chair. Due to other commitments, Reg feels unable to undertake the office of chairman and with the sad death of Isobel the Society will be facing a real crisis unless we have volunteers to not only join the committee but to take office. Please consider whether you can join in the not very onerous task of keeping the Society live and active.

Sadly we have recently lost two of the founder members of Hatfield This Century.

Denis 'Doc' Watson, who served on the first committee in September 1990, died in a nursing home at the great age of 97. A full time serving member of the Herts. Constabulary he was instrumental in introducing mobile radios into the force. His memories of his service were recounted in his book 'When Coppers Carried Capes' some of which we have included in past Newsletters and have permission to use others as and when we wish.

HERITAGE OPEN DAY SUCCESS

As members will know this was the first time that the society had organised anything like this as in the past it had always been WGC. We have more unique buildings to offer!

The weekend was a huge success starting on Friday 12th September. Most of the buildings opened their doors on Saturday and Sunday. It was estimated over 500 people visited the Hatfield properties and came from as far as London and Cambridgeshire. There was a good response to many of the properties such as Howe Dell School which held tours all over the building including the attic!

The Cockaigne Housing Development reported a good attendance. Residents seemed delighted to show the benefits of open plan living.

The Hatfield House Real tennis Club had two tours which were well attended and there were also exhibitions of the game. Colin Dean gave an excellent talk about the history and its origins. It was interesting to learn after-

wards that some Hatfield people were unaware the courts existed!

The local churches proved popular particularly St Lukes.

There were two guided tours organised on the Sunday one of the Barnet By-pass and the other of Mill Green.

The Lone Star Exhibition at the museum was extremely successful.

The most popular building of the weekend was undoubtedly Great Nast Hyde. Over 250 people attended the two afternoon tours. The owners, Mr and Mrs Bailey, were amazed by the response and in fact had to rearrange the tours by dividing them into two groups to see the garden and then the house. Mr and Mrs Bailey gave a good insight into the history and refurbishment of the house and the plans for the garden.

The society plan to organise a similar event next year and hopefully will have more properties available to the public.

Joan Cobern

Herbert John Gray MBE did not use his first christian name and was always known as John. Hatfield born and bred he also was a prolific writer. His books on cricket and football are in the library. A fount of knowledge of all things relating to old Hatfield and Newtown, John was often asked to confirm the contents of articles submitted for inclusion in the Newsletters. He died in October aged 86.

Both will be sadly missed.

HERTFORDSHIRE PUDDINGSTONE

(Continued)

THE GEOLOGY OF HERTFORD- SHIRE

- 150 million years ago

The oldest rocks exposed in Hertfordshire, the Gault Clays and Upper Greensand were formed. The blue-grey Gault Clay which contains an abundance of marine fossils was formed from mud carried by rivers off the land to the north and deposited in the sea. Where the clay became sandy it formed the Upper Greensand.

- 300 million years ago

The continents began to drift apart and the Atlantic Ocean formed gradually separating the Americas from Europe and Africa. While dinosaurs were roaming across America much of Southern Britain was submerged under a warm, relatively shallow sea. As there was virtually no land to produce mud or silt to cloud the water, the seas became clean and clear. Coccoliths, tiny calcite accumulations produced by planktonic algae which flourished in the sea, sank to the seabed to form a white ooze as the algae died. Gradually over a period of thirty million years the ooze formed a layer of white Chalk over 1000 metres thick. Flint is a very hard and durable form of silica and is abundant in the Upper Chalk occurring in tabular form or nodules up to 60cms in size. Flint nodules can be found in any shape and sometimes are mistaken for fossils.

Nodules of the mineral Marcasite are commonly found in the lower beds of Chalk in all shapes and sizes. The dark brown crust is caused by a coating of Limonite (hydroxide of Iron) but when broken they exhibit radiating, brassy-looking crystals of iron sulphide which soon tarnish when exposed to the air.

- 65 million years ago

Major earth movements in the earth's crust caused the Cretaceous Seas to retreat and most of Britain emerged as 'Chalk' land with a subtropical climate. Further earth move-

ments tilted Britain downwards and the south-east became a giant estuary where a 15 metre thick layer of sands, pebbles and clays was deposited by the rivers. These sands, clays and pebble beds now form the Reading Beds.

- 50 million years ago

The sea retreated. In places water containing silica in solution percolated through the beds of sand and cemented them into a very hard sandstone known as sarsen. Where bands of flint pebbles occurred in the sands the percolating silica solution cemented the material into the hard rock we now call Hertfordshire Puddingstone.

Further earth movements uplifted and tilted the land and encroachment of a shallow subtropical sea resulted in deposition of up to 100 metres of dark grey London Clay over the Reading Beds.

- Two million years ago

Britain experienced many rapid climatic changes. Relatively long, cold Glacial stages created a cold, bleak landscape with stunted vegetation. Animals such as the Woolly Mammoth, Giant Elk, Woolly Rhinoceros and Wolf managed to survive the harsh conditions.

It was only during an earlier glacial stage (the Anglian Glaciation) that ice reached Hertfordshire from the northeast. It is estimated that at times the ice sheets must have been up to a thousand metres thick.

The main deposits left by the glaciers are tills - clays containing stone fragments plucked from rocks by the traversing ice - sand and gravels. Most of the gravels are found in the Vale of St. Albans where the ice sheets lay, and are extensively quarried as aggregate for the building industry.

The Glacial stages were separated by shorter, warmer Interglacials. Extensive grasslands covered the river valleys and these supported large herds of grazing animals such as rhinoceros, hippopotamus, bison and deer and predators such as the hyena, lion and sabre-toothed cat preyed upon them.

*From "Pebbles and Puddingstones" produced
by St. Albans Museum*

PHYLLIS WHITE
1914 - 2003

A popular and well known Hatfield figure died recently at the age of 89. Descended from the Whitby/Dunham families, Phyl lived with parents Fred and Christine Dunham at No. 22 Fore Street from 1916 until 1931. Phyl's brother, Frank Dunham, died a few years ago and Marjorie with husband Albert Page, lives at Ashley Court.

The family then moved to West Goldings, French Horn Lane where Hollier Court now stands.

Phyl was a keen member of the Local History Society for a while until she became ill. She was very interested in the talks on Mondays and could reel off all the names of the people and shops in Fore Street.

Phyl's father, Fred Dunham had a builder's yard where Diamond Motors now stands and her mother, Christine Whitby was a teacher as was her father before her. There is a plaque by a small altar in memory of him in St. Etheldreda's Church.

Due to her husband, George White, having a brain tumour at the age of 27 and being an invalid, Phyl took over the business of "Richardson's", a shop which sold haberdashery, wool, materials, underwear etc. and later on school uniforms. The first shop was part of the Salisbury Hotel, the second shop was on the Parade in St. Albans Road East and the third in the Hatfield Town Centre.

Phyl was dedicated to raising money for charity through the Trefoil Guild along with her friends Evie Hart, Tella Hitchins, Eva Bishop etc. The Isabel Hospice was the main charity they supported and after Phyl's death £500 was raised for the Hospice in her memory.

We had quite a rare situation 45 years ago with 5 generations of 5 eldest females celebrating together:-

Louisa Whitby	Great Great Grand
	Mother
Christine Dunham	Great Grandmother
Phyllis White	Grandmother
Jean Cox	Mother
Marian Hurlle	Daughter

Jean Cox

Leominster

In 1965 I compiled and published a narrative pedigree of the Wesley family. Anne Wesley, known as Nancy, was born on 17 May 1701 and was baptised on 31 May 1701 at Epworth, Lincolnshire. On 2 December 1725, as Anne Westley, she married John Lambert, an Epworth surveyor ay Finningley, Nottinghamshire. Although there is no confirmation of the Lambert's residence in Hatfield, Dr. John Vickers, the Methodist historian, has kindly sent me the following quotations from the Journal of Charles Wesley:

"Friday June 3rd [1737]: Between six and seven this evening I took horse for Cheshunt, eighteen miles from London; got there by nine; and the next morning rode eighteen miles further, to Hatfield, to see my sister Nancy ..."

"Wednesday August 17th [1737]: After spending some time at Hatfield, I set out with my brother Lambert, for London. At Epping he went back, full of good resolutions."

(It appears that the 'good resolutions' related to a drink problem)! However, as the Journal does not mention Fore Street, it would be helpful to know the source of this, additional, information.

Malcolm Pinhorn

Hay on Wye

Florence Tingey ("Mog") died in August 2003 at the age of ninety three. Born in St. Albans she married Randall Tingey in 1933 and lived in the flat above the shop in St. Albans Road until it closed in 1968.

Janet Robinson

I am in receipt of the September Newsletter and I am interested in Mr. Pinhorn's enquiry re the late Mr. Speaight.

My father worked for Mr. Speaight in the antiques gallery in Goodrich House. When I was old enough I used to take his tea up to him.

When I left school I worked in Fore Street for 6 years opposite Dr. Cox's. I used to see Mr. Speaight come down the hill, bowler hat, rolled umbrella and brief case and come home again in the evening.

I was brought up to believe that he and his brother were court photographers operating from Bond Street in London.

I wonder, when did he carry out the restoration work, under what name and where would his builder's yard have been? In my recollection the builders in Hatfield in those days were W.J.Richardson in Park Street, J.J.Burgess of Batterdale, J. Naden in French Horn Lane and F. Dunham of London Road.

I am now 90 years old and have two brothers, Harold who is 92 and Wilfred who is 96. For the record, one of my family sang at the laying of the foundation stone of the Park Street Chapel in 1823 and I have a document stating that my maternal grandfather owned the Tudor Cottage. I could recount the story of the great flood of Hatfield when Howe Dell overflowed, the peace celebrations and the coming of the tank, the Sunday School parties held on the North Front and the kindness of Lord Salisbury throwing the park open every spring for 'wooding' when you could collect and take home all dead wood - but no saws or choppers allowed! I could write a lot more but in conclusion I recall that my Uncle Jonas Austin was landlord of the Jacob's Well public house opposite the Horse and Groom in Park Street.

G. Austin Prime

At the turn of the last century Walter Whitby (born 1862) whose parents kept the East Indian Chief public house in Fore Street, was head master of the C of E school on the London Road Hatfield.

Following in his father's footsteps Walter's son, Geoffrey Charles was a master at St. Audrey's mixed school in Endymion Road in 1924 when the girls from the London Road school joined the boys who had moved there in 1905.

Geoffrey Charles taught science, metal work and violin at the old London Road building to which the boys were marched. He also took the pupils on nature walks along the railway banks south of the school.

In 1913 he was secretary of the Hatfield Annual Flower and Poultry Show, He became a sergeant in the 1st Herts Regiment during the 1914-18 war.

Under his direction the St. Audrey's School string orchestra, comprising all boys, won the National Union of Schools Orchestra Intermediate Challenge Shield, the winning piece being broadcast by the BBC in the then Children's' Hour. Geoffrey also taught and coached the St. Audrey's former pupils Evening School Orchestra which won the N.U. Schools Orchestras Trophy at the Crystal Palace in 1930.

In 1933 he took up the post of headmaster at the Merchant Taylors School at Ashwell, introducing science, music and drama to the curriculum.

The school's first production was in a open air theatre made from an old rubbish dump under the direction of Mr. Whitby and consisted of an excerpt from "The Winters Tale" with music.

The school was closed as a secondary school in 1947 and became a further education centre. Geoffrey Whitby, who retired as headmaster, was appointed county rural education officer, a position which he held until 1956.

HATFIELD AND ITS PEOPLE

Some 40 people attended the meeting at Oxlease House on Wednesday 3rd of December to discuss the formation of a team combining the WEA and Hatfield Local History Society to update the 12 volumes of books published in 1961. Aably chaired by Peter Massingham, slide views of the town at the time of the re-development were shown by Ken Wright and evoked many memories and comments. Other displays of static pictures etc. relating to the period from 1960 onwards encouraged suggestions on how the project might be run. It is hoped that small groups will form to undertake the updating of each book which can then be moulded into one comprehensive publication. Several people were nominated as leaders or collators for various titles and some relative articles were collected for distribution the the appropriate groups. A further meeting has been arranged for February 25th at Oxlease House. Thanks were extended to the ladies who kindly prepared and served the refreshments.

Spring Programme

9 February 2.30

The Development of
Letchworth Garden City
by
Ros Alwood
Curator of Letchworth Museum

8 March 7.30

Further Pictures of Hatfield
Slide Show
by
Philip Porter

19 April 2.30

Local Medieval New Towns
by
Jim Page

10 May 7.30

AGM
Followed by
Hertfordshire Railway Accidents
by
Tom Doig

All at Hatfield Swim Centre

Seasonal Greetings



To All Members